Instructions
FOR THE
WHOLE YEAR.

PART III. TOM. I.

FOR

Festivals.

BEING

Practical Thoughts and Directions for all the FEASTS of Obligation and others, from the Beginning of *Advent*, to the End of *April*.

Printed in the Year 1699.

THE PREFACE.

TO learn from the Example of those Servants of God, who are gone before, is taught us by S. Paul, *who in his Epistle to the* Hebrews, c. 11. *instructs that People from the several Instances of* Enoch, Noe, Abraham, Moses, Jephte, Samuel, *the Prophets*, &c. *in the Fundamental Duty of Faith; and by the wonderful Effects it had in them, first sweetly inspires them with the Sense of their Obligation, and then strongly moves them to the Imitation of such great Examples. This same Method has been ever since observ'd by all the Zealous Promoters of Christian Disciplin and Piety, who, to encourage more Powerfully their Followers to pursue the Narrow way of the Gospel, have ever made use of this Expedient, as par-*

ticularly S. Chrysostom, S. Benedict, Cassiodorus, &c. *And what has been the Success of it,* S. Augustin *sufficient testifies both in himself and others, acknowledging the Examples of others Virtues to have fill'd him with Confusion, and given him a great Aversion to himself and Sin. And there's no question, this has been one Principal Motive to our Holy Predecessors, the Primitive Pastors of the Church of God, to Consecrate Days in Memory of the Holy Servants of God departed, and appoint their Festivals to be kept; that hence the Faithful, in all Ages, might learn from their Examples, and by admiring their Virtues, have Daily Encouragement to follow their steps. This we are taught by S.* Augustin, *who says, that Christians Celebrate the Memory of Martyrs with a Religious Solemnity, that they may be excited to an Imitation of them, be Partakers of their Merits, and assisted by their Prayers: And by S.* Chrysostom; *No Body is ignorant, says he, that Christians Celebrate the Triumphs of the Martyrs, that they*

may

*may give them the Honor that is due, and by their Examples be instructed in the way of Virtue. This the Church Her self has declar'd in the Collect of S.*Felix, Jan. 14. *where she thus prays:* Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that the Examples of thy Saints may excite us to the Amendment of our Lives; that as we Celebrate their Festivals, so we may imitate their Virtues.

It ought to be then one Business of Christians, to answer those Purposes, for which these Solemnities were ordain'd, and not to disappoint the Church, Solicitous for their Eternal Good, in this so Holy an Institution. To help them in this Work, is the Design of this little Volume; which being a kind of Abridgement of all the Saints Lives, both in the Roman *and* Sarum *Calendar, and laying before them those Particular Excellencies, for which they were most Remarkable, furnishes them with Daily Matter, both for their Devotion and Imitation; and may be serviceable, especially to those,*

who are not provided with larger Volumes, or have not leiſure to read them: So that by a paſſing Glance here, they may be inform'd of the true Spirit of the Church in all her Feſtivals, and be deliver'd from that miſchievous Ignorance, with which too many go to Prayers; who knowing little more of the Days beſides their Names, are depriv'd of thoſe many Advantages, the Church has deſign'd them in their Inſtitution.

I will add nothing more, but beſeech Almighty God, that as he has mercifully provided us with ſo many Great Examples, ſo he will give us Grace to follow them, which I heartily beg for all, that ſhall uſe this Book, and hope they will do the ſame for Me.

Inſtructions

Instructions
FOR
Festivals.

Vigil of St. Andrew, *Nov.* 29.

Ecclus 44. 26. 45. 10. *Jo.* 1. 35. 51.

1. PRepare by Fasting, Humiliation, and Self-denial, for the following Festival: So many degrees of the Divine Spirit thou mayest hope to obtain, as thou renouncest thy one.

It being alſo the Day of St. Saturninus,

WHO under the Emperor *Maximian*, having ſuffer'd a long Impriſonment, and many Torments, both of Racks and Fire, was at length Beheaded for his Faith in Chriſt. Give Thanks for his Victory; Pray for all, who at this time, are ſuffering for Juſtice or Faith; and while thou haſt the Example before thee of ſuch as have given their Lives for Chriſt, fail not to ſhew ſome more than uſual Patience in whatever thou haſt to ſuffer this Day. It can be no Advantage to thee, to Honor the Martyrs, if thou receiveſt thy Trials with the Impatience of Unbelievers. To have the Faith of a Chriſtian, and ſuffer as one, who believes not, cannot be the way to a Crown. Put thy Soul therefore in a good Diſpoſition, whether for preſent Troubles, or whatever are to come; Pray for Patience, Submiſſion and Courage; they are the Gifts of God, and as he has granted them to others, ſo the like Mercy is open to thee; if thou perſevereſt in asking with a firm Hope in God;

God; if thou doſt not deſpair becauſe of thy own Weakneſs, nor expect to go thro' thy Sufferings without Trouble. On the Day of a Martyr, ſuffer ſomething as a Martyr.

St. *Andrew*, *Nov.* 30.

Rom. 10. 10, 18. *Mat.* 4. 18, 22.

1. HE was an Apoſtle: Pray for all thoſe, that ſucceed in his Function: Pray for all Biſhops and Paſtors, that they may be quickned with the Spirit and Zeal of the Apoſtles, for the good of the Church and their Flock.

2. He was a Martyr, and died on a Croſs: Pray for all under whatever Croſs and Affliction; beſeech Almighty God to give them the Patience of this Apoſtle, that in their ſufferings they may not loſe, but poſſeſs their Souls, and reap the fruit of the Croſs in laſting Comforts.

St. *Andrew*, the Brother of *Peter*, and Diſciple of St. *John* Baptiſt, had no ſooner heard from his Maſter, that Chriſt was the Lamb of God, that takes away the Sins of the World, but he

preſently follow'd him, and informing his Brother of the Treaſure he had found, conducted him likewiſe to him; an excellent ſtep to the Apoſtleſhip, and proper means for his becoming a True Diſciple. Chriſt came to ſeek that which was loſt, and thoſe, who enter into his School, muſt not come without this Charity. All ſtand in need of Chriſt's help, and there's no better way of ſecuring this, than by our helping others, and communicating to them what light we have, for their Inſtruction; for Chriſt being in all his Members, in this we do ſervice, not only to them, but to him, and oblige him to our protection, and more plentifully to pour forth his Bleſſings on us, for our perpetual Eſtabliſhment in all good.

As many as do thus, have reaſon to rejoice on this Feſtival, and raiſe their hopes to a lively Confidence in the Aſſiſtance of Heaven, ſince God, who is infinit in Charity, cannot deny his Grace to thoſe, who being made after his Likeneſs, endeavour daily to perfect this Image, by the ſincere imitation of his Love. I wiſh all Chriſtians would heartily petition this Day for the encreaſe of this Charity, that as they profeſs themſelves Members of Chriſt,

ſo

ſo they would give this ſolid proof of it, by concurring with their Head, as far as their Circumſtances will permit, in giving Life to the World: This is what Chriſt has undertaken, and as many, as are truly incorporated in him, will, to their Power, contribute to the carrying on his Work: The Wickedneſs of the World, and general Corruption of Chriſtians, afford too frequent Opportunities of practiſing this Charity; ſince whoever makes one of any Company, muſt, with very little Obſervation, too often find a want of it, in the common Abuſes of prophaning God's Name, of Hurtful, Uncharitable, and Looſe Diſcourſes, and ſuch Exceſſes, as are inconſiſtent with the Humility, Modeſty, and Temperance of the Goſpel. And how have theſe Evils gain'd ſuch Authority, as, in ſome manner, to be eſteem'd no Reproach to our Profeſſion, but becauſe, for want of this Charity, Chriſtians have not Courage to ſhew their diſlike of what is evil, but chuſe rather weakly to comply, than reprove what they know deſerves it? They have found Chriſt, but dare not, with this Apoſtle, inform their Friends, where he is; but by joining with them in their Infirmi-

ties

ties and Diſorders, help to confirm them in their Darkneſs. This is a Weakneſs, which ought to be renounced this Day, that while we pretend to honor this Apoſtle in his Feſtival, we may ſincerely do it, by the Imitation of his Vertues, of his Charity, his Courage, and his Zeal; and endeavor to render the Practice of them ſo faſhionable, that it may become as Friendly and Familiar amongſt Chriſtians, to put one another in mind of their Faults, for the bringing them nearer to Chriſt, and to Heaven, as it is to inform them, of what is likely to prejudice their Health, or preſcribe them a Remedy, when they are Indiſpoſed or Sick. Something of this ought to be encourag'd; for truly it is no ſmall Reflection on Chriſtians, that believing their Salvation to be the only Subſtantial Good, they cannot bear being put in mind, when they are going out of the way, but by their Diſpleaſure diſcourage this Charity, and willingly admitting all other Helps, take it for an Affront only to be help'd towards Heaven. This is nothing but the effect of Pride; and tho' we know, it was by this, Paradiſe was firſt loſt, yet we carry it on ſtill; and by following

lowing its Suggeſtions, evidently hazard our perpetual Excluſion; and nothing can diſappoint its Malice ſo much, as the Goodneſs of thoſe, who not aw'd by its Diſcouragements, venture the promoting our Eternal Intereſt, tho' with the Danger of our Diſpleaſure.

This is the Inſtruction, this Saint gives us, in his firſt ſtep towards Chriſt; and ſee how his Charity was rewarded; for not long after, being employed in his Fiſhing, Chriſt calls upon him, and commands him to follow him, accompanying his Call with that powerful Grace, that without any Regard to the Concerns of this Life, he preſently quitted his Nets, and following his new Maſter, never more departed from him. A good Leſſon for thoſe, that undertake his Function; their Buſineſs is Chriſt, and not this World; and as many as go to Chriſt, not leaving this World, but with Hopes of gaining it, may be true Diſciples of the World, but are in Danger of never being Chriſt's, who offers himſelf a Maſter to thoſe, that forſake all for him, but not to ſuch, as deſign to gain the World by him. 'Tis true, as we are here encompaſs'd with the Neceſſities

ſities of this Mortal Life, the Church requires a Proviſion for the decent Subſiſtance of Paſtors, and likewiſe, that they may be enabled to ſuccor the Poor; and for this end it is, many Noble Foundations have been made by the Pious Charity of the Faithful, looking on them as the beſt Treaſurers for the Afflicted and Diſtreſs'd; but ſure, it muſt be a Miſtake, when taking all they poſſeſs to be their own, they make their Revenues ſerve only to raiſe themſelves in the World, and ſatisfie ſuch Inclinations to Vanity, Liberty, and Eaſe, as are ſcarce allowable in the Laity, and are Arguments not of Souls that forſake, but admire and love the World. Their Buſineſs with the World is only to live themſelves, and be able to relieve others, and all is that is thus laid out, is Juſt; but all beyond this carries, I fear, ſomething of Injuſtice along with it, and is diſpoſing of what is only depoſited in their Hands, but contrary to the Will of the Donors: And thoſe that do thus, are a kind of Apoſtles, who have not yet obey'd the Call of Chriſt, in leaving their Nets, but live engag'd in them, and have more reaſon to be confounded, than rejoice in this Feaſt

of

of St. *Andrew*, who left all to follow Christ.

And this is not the Duty only of those, who succeed in the Apostolick Function; but, in some degree, belongs to as many, as profess themselves Disciples or Followers of Christ: For the World being contrary to Christ, there are none can live in the World, but as far as they find it inconsistent with his Spirit, are oblig'd, so far, at least, to forsake it. Hence, our own Inclinations being corrupt, 'tis impossible a Man should be a Christian, that has not learnt, in the first place, to forsake himself: Company, Conversation and Entertainments being corrupt, hence Friends too are to be forsaken, as far as these lead us from Christ. Parents too, by their Passion, Blindness, or ill Example, being often a Hindrance to Salvation, are so far to be forsaken. Employments and Professions, thro' an Injustice, which is almost inseparable from too many, are so far to be forsaken: Riches, Honors, Pleasures, and Diversions, as far as they immoderately engage the Heart, and either wholly draw it, or considerably divert it from God, are so far to be forsaken. There's nothing so very innocent, or

even

even commendable in it ſelf, but is capable of being abus'd, and becoming a Snare to us; and then, tho' it be as dear, or as neceſſary as a Hand or an Eye, it muſt be cut off and forſaken; and without this, there's no being a Diſciple of Chriſt. The Call therefore of Chriſt to this Apoſtle, *Sequere me*, *Follow me*; is directed to all Chriſtians; and thoſe that are truly ſo, obey his Command; tho it be with Violence to Nature, Affection, Inclination, or Cuſtom, and make it the Subject of their Endeavors, to examine daily into the Practice of this Obedience, ſo as to be ever laboring, to weaken or break thoſe Bonds, which hold them from following Chriſt. And as for thoſe Chriſtians, who are conſcious of their being in an ill State, as either going from Chriſt, or living at a diſtance from him, they need not doubt the only Occaſion of their Miſery to be their Diſobedience to this his Call, and that there's ſomething they cannot perſwade themſelves to abandon for his ſake. Here's the Ground of our greateſt Spiritual Misfortunes; a ſtrong Adheſion of the Soul to ſomething Created, hinders it from following the Commands of God; it hears Chriſt calling,

calling, but obeys not, becauſe it has not learnt to renounce it ſelf, and purchaſe Heaven at any rate. Here then it is every one ought to conſider this Day, what it is in particular, that withholds them from Chriſt, and earneſtly petition for that Powerful Grace, whereby they may uſe Violence to themſelves, and with this Apoſtle, forſake all to follow him.

It was this Self-denying Method thus happily begun, brought S. *Andrew* at length to the Glory of Martyrdom, when not yielding to the Zeal of a Pious Multitude, that ſeem'd reſolv'd to reſcue him out of the Hands of his Enemies, he gave Proof of the earneſt Deſire he had of laying down his Life for Chriſt; which appear'd ſtill more lively, when coming in Sight of the Croſs, on which he was to ſuffer, not at all Dejected, but Tranſported with Joy, he cry'd out, O happy Croſs! A long time ſought for, and moſt earneſtly deſir'd, receive me now, and conduct me to my Maſter, who by dying on thee, purchas'd my Redemption: And having liv'd two Days on the Croſs, he went into a better Life with him, the Reſemblance of whoſe Death he had ſo much deſir'd. This

Apo-

Apoſtle found ſomething deſirable in the Croſs, and eſteem'd the Suffering on it a Happineſs; having the Love of his Maſter to ſweeten its Pains, and conſidering theſe as the ſafeſt way to the Enjoyment of him: A Leſſon we eaſily know how to admire, but not ſo eaſily to practiſe; and yet ſo neceſſary, that as many degrees, as we are from it, ſo far, 'tis to be fear'd, we are from the way to Heaven, and from the Love of him, who firſt taught it by his Example. Not that all are call'd to the Trial of a violent Death; but becauſe we are all under an Obligation of being prepar'd for it, to have ſuch Diſpoſitions in our Souls, as to be ever in a readineſs of Suffering, and loſing all, even Life it ſelf, for Chriſt's ſake, that is, rather than loſe Him. The condition of taking up the Croſs is Univerſal, and without Exception, requir'd by the Goſpel; now the taking it up being only in order to ſuffer, there can be no better Meaſures of a True Diſciple, than in the patient ſuffering ſo much of the Croſs at leaſt, as God ſhall appoint for him. And ſince we have almoſt a daily Trial of this, we have ſo often Occaſions of diſcovering, how near we come to the Character of

a

a Diſciple; and by the Method of our bearing ordinary Croſſes, may gueſs ſomething at the Diſpoſitions we have, for giving our Lives to God, and loſing all for him, if he ſhould require it at our Hands. Examin therefore this Day, how far thou art prepar'd for this: And deceive not thy ſelf with ſaying, Thou would'ſt cheerfully ſuffer all Extremities, if there ſhould be an occaſion; for if thou canſt not with Patience bear the ordinary Trials of an Injury or Contempt; if thou canſt not ſubmit to the Daily Inconveniences of Humane Life, to Neceſſities, Diſappointments, Sickneſs, Pain, or to the Difficulties of Regularity, and good Diſcipline; how wilt thou ſhed thy Blood? If thou art not Faithful in little Occaſions, how wilt thou be ſo in greater? This Apoſtle, and the reſt of the Martyrs, did not arrive to the Perfection of laying down their Lives for Chriſt all at once; they ſuffer'd many Martyrdoms, before they came to be crown'd with the laſt: And what they ſuffer'd at their Deaths, was only the Recompence, and Continuation of what they had done all their Lives. *We who live, are always deliver'd unto Death for Jeſus*, 2 Cor. 4. 11. *For thee*

we

we are mortified all the Day. This all are to practise, who desire to be true Disciples.

Conclude therefore the Devotion of this Day, by Petitioning, First, For the Charity of this Apostle, that thou maist readily assist thy Neighbor, in whatever may be for his Spiritual Advantage, and that he never suffer thro' thy Indifferency or Neglect. Secondly, Ask for his Courage and Resolution, that no Carnal Affection, or Worldly Tie may ever hinder thee from following Christ. Thirdly, Pray for his Constancy and Perseverance, that thou maist be in a Disposition of losing all for Christ; and forget not to prepare thy Soul by Patience in lesser Trials.

DECEMBER.

St. *Eligius*, *Decem.* 1.

1. HE was bred up to a Working Trade; but being mindful, that he was to work for Heaven, as well as for Bread, his great Care was to join the Exercises of Religious Duties to his Profession, as of Prayer, Fasting,

Fasting, Watching, and Alms; and as often as Circumstances would permit, he had some good Book lying open before him. Learn to Sanctifie thy Labors by his Example: If thou art of the Number of those, who work for a Livelihood, endeavor to be Faithful in what thou hast undertaken, and this, not only in regard of thy Neighbor, by nicely avoiding whatever is Fraudulent, or may be to his Prejudice, thro' thy Neglect; but likewise to God, and thy own Soul, by a watchful Care against all the Suggestions of a Covetous, Worldly, or Solicitous Temper; that so thou neither rob him of his Honor, nor deprive thy self of what is necessary for thy Salvation. What will thy Gain profit thee, if thou lose thy Soul? If thy Employment be in Works of Charity, or in such Business, as thy State requires, lose not the Advantage of what thou dost, but daily offer to God thy Labors, and mix them with Thoughts of Heaven, that thy Industry may be serviceable for the next Life, as well as this. 2. His Piety at length became so remarkable, that he was call'd forth to the Ecclesiastic State, and Consecrated Bishop of *Noyon* in *France*, and satisfying all the

Duties

Duties of his Charge with a wonderful Zeal, made a Happy End in the Year 665. Pray for all Biſhops in God's Church, that they may follow ſo great an Example. It being the firſt Day of the Month, forget not to begin it ſo, that, if it ſhould be thy laſt, it may be to thee the Beginning of a Happy Eternity.

St. *Bibiana*, An. 353. *December* 2.

Eccluſ. 51. 13. 17. *Mat.* 13. 44. 52.

1. A Virgin: Pray for all under the Profeſſion of Virginity. 2. Her Father, Mother, and Siſter, were all Martyrs; Pray for thy Parents and Relations, that God would perfect them in Faith and in Charity. 3. She ſaw her ſelf deſtitute of all Human Help, ſpoil'd of her Goods, caſt out of Doors, and yet continued Faithful: She reſolutely withſtood all the Aſſaults of thoſe, who undertook to defile her, and choſe Priſons, Racks, and Death, rather than depart from her Duty, and offend her God; Pray for like Fidelity and Patience under all Trials

Trials; that neither Convenience nor Intereſt may ever prevail on thee to tranſgreſs thy Duty; that thou maiſt be Proof againſt all Flatteries, and chuſe all Evils before that of Sin.

St. *Francis Xavier*, 1552. *Dec.* 3.

Eccluſ. 31. 8, 11. *Mark* 16, 15. 18.

THE great Apoſtle of the *Indies*, who in this latter Age appear'd with the Charity and Zeal of the Apoſtolic Times. 1. It was by an extraordinary Application to Prayer and Mortification, he obtain'd of God that great Spirit, with which he undertook, and diſcharg'd, with ſo wonderful Succeſs, the Miſſion of the *Eaſt*: Pray for all thoſe, who throughout the World, are preparing to be Laborers in our Lord's Vineyard; that by the like Exerciſes, they may obtain a Spirit and Zeal like his; that they may not tempt God, in undertaking ſo perfect a Charge with Corrupt and Worldly Souls; and that by Neglect, Liberties, or Sloth, they may not bring a Scandal on their Profeſſion. 2. He planted the Faith of Chriſt in Seven Kingdoms, ſpar'd no Labor, in contributing to the

the Good of Souls, and had Heaven to give a Bleſſing to his Endeavors. Pray for the People of thoſe Nations, that God would perfect them in their Faith; and ſhew forth his Light again to ſuch of them, as are return'd to Darkneſs: Pray for all thoſe, who labor in the Care of Souls that God would Direct, Accompany, and Bleſs them in all their Labors; Pray they may be Faithful in their Charge; put up the ſame Petition for thy ſelf, whatever thy Obligations be.

St. *Barbara*, 280. *December* 4.

1. A Holy Virgin, who had eſpous'd her ſelf to Chriſt, and would not be prevail'd on by any Solicitations or Worldly Motives, to be faithleſs to Him: Pray for the like Conſtancy and Grace for all thoſe, who are under the like Engagements: Beſeech Almighty God to Strengthen thee againſt all Temptations, Aſſaults, and Snares: And amidſt ſo general a Corruption in this Kind, Pray for all thoſe, who are any ways expos'd thro' Neceſſity, Heedleſneſs, or Levity. 2. Her Father, a Heathen, was the firſt, that accus'd her, and enflam'd the Perſecutors with Cruelty and Rage againſt

gainſt her: She ſuffer'd Variety of Torments, and Death with Courage and Patience, and took the Advantage of her Father's Inhumanity, for the fixing her Heart with greater Love on her Father in Heaven. Learn with what Patience and Sweetneſs thou ought'ſt to bear the diſagreeable Humors of Parents, or other Superiors; learn to turn them to thy Improvement in Vertue; and that thy Misfortune is not, in being under ſuch uneaſie Circumſtances, but in not making a good Uſe of them. Pray for all thoſe, who are under theſe Trials; and that both thy ſelf and others may ſubmit to them with the Patience of this Saint, and by her Example, ever draw Good out of Evil. It being likewiſe the Day of S. *Oſmond*, Biſhop of *Salisbury*, a Man of great Virtue; who, after a Holy Life, died in the Year 1099. Pray for thy Country that God would lead it into all Virtue and Truth.

St. *Sabbas*, An. 531. *Decemb.* 5.

1. HE retir'd into a Deſart, where free from the Diſtractions of

the World, he might attend with greater Application to the buſineſs of Eternity. Lament the many diſſipations of mind, to which thou haſt voluntarily expos'd thy ſelf; reſolve to withdraw from whatever is dangerous, unprofitable, or not becoming thy State: Pray for conſtancy amidſt all unavoidable diſtractions; remember God and Eternity in the midſt of thy buſineſs; learn to be an Ermite in the World, by taking off thy Affections from all thou poſſeſſeſt: Thou art one Day to leave all; practiſe ſomething of this every Day: 'Tis a difficult work, and is beſt done by degrees. 2. He was an Abbot: Pray for all thoſe, who have this Charge, that in their Zeal for Virtue and Religion, they may follow this great Example.

St. *Nicholas*, An. 320. *Dec.* 6.

Heb. 13. 7, 17. *Matth.* 25. 14, 23.

1. HE was the Child of Prayer, being obtain'd of God, like *Samuel*, and the Reward of his Parents Virtue: A good Leſſon for Parents, to recommend

mend their Children daily to God, by whoſe Bleſſing alone they can be ſecur'd againſt the corruption of the World, and the infinite dangers of Sin. 2. His Life was the practice of Abſtinence, Mortification, and extraordinary Charity, in relieving the Diſtreſs'd: Follow his Example, as far as thy Circumſtances will permit: Pray againſt all immoderate love of thy ſelf, and ſeeking thy own eaſe; and begin to fear, that a Senſual Method of indulging and pleaſing thy ſelf, will not lead thee to that Crown, which our Forefathers have not gain'd, but by Self-denials. 3. He was choſen Biſhop by the direction of Heaven, and in that Charge was a Light ſhining to Men, in all manner of Piety, Liberality, Hoſpitality, and the Care of his Flock: Pray that all, who are rais'd to that Dignity, may be prepar'd by his Virtues, be the Choice of Heaven, and not of Favor or State. Pray for all Biſhops now in God's Church, that they may be every way Faithful to their Charge, that their Zeal and Charity may be anſwerable to their Dignity. Pray in particular for that Prelate, of whoſe Flock thou art one.

St. *Ambroſe*, An. 390. *Dec.* 7.

2 *Tim.* 4. 1, 8. *Matth.* 3. 13, 19.

1. HE was choſen Biſhop of *Milan* by a particular direction of Heaven; and ſince it is the cauſe of very conſiderable evils in the Church, that many ſeek Church Dignities with little other Conſiderations, beſides that of enjoying the Benefice, without weighing the Charge; fail not, this Day, to make it the ſubject of thy moſt earneſt Prayers; that God would pleaſe to remedy this great diſorder, for the good of his Church; by making them truly ſenſible of their crime, who preſent ſuch as are unworthy, and mercifully excluding all from being Paſtors of his Flock, who are not by him call'd to this Function, and fitted for the juſt diſcharge of all its obligations. 2. Having undertaken the Paſtoral Charge, he was a zealous Promoter of Church Diſciplin, oppoſing Errors, and puniſhing Vice, never letting the Authority of Offenders, or the fear of diſpleaſing Great Ones, deterr him from the juſt cenſure

censure of the Offence: Pray for the like Spirit in all Prelates, that they may be above all Flattery and Fear; that no Human respects may over-rule them; that Interest or Favor may not draw them from Justice, and that they never prostitute their Character to the promoting of evil. 3. It was by his Piety and Zeal S. *Augustin* was reclaim'd from his Errors and Sinful Life: Pray for all those, who are unfortunately engag'd in the like Snares, that on this Day they be made Sensible of their Evils, and return to Virtue and Truth. Engage the Charity of this Saint to join with thee, for the obtaining this grace in behalf of all Sinners.

Conception of the B. Virgin, *Dec.* 8.

Prov. 8. 22, 35. *Matth.* 1. 1, 16.

THis Day is a Festival of Joy ~~and Thanksgiving~~ to all those, who have a sense of their Redemption. ~~For~~ whoever considers that long Night of Sin, which had cover'd the Earth for so many ~~Thousand~~ Years, must ~~needs honor with joy that first Moment of~~ gladly celebrate the her

her Sanctification, who was choſen from all Eternity to be Mother of him, who was to be the Light of the World, and to take off that Malediction, which Sin had brought upon it. All, who conſider this, muſt rejoice, when *Mary*, like the Morning Star, begins to riſe and foretells the near approach of Day: And this joy muſt be accompanied with moſt ſolemn Thankſgiving, for thoſe extraordinary Favors, by which ſhe was diſtinguiſh'd from all that are Born of Women. Theſe Privileges, the effect of the Divine Bounty, demand our Thanks, ſince tho' ſhe was the ſubject of this Grace, yet the Mercy was to be extended to all.

But having paid this Tribute of Praiſe and Thankſgiving, and ſeriouſly conſider'd the eminent Sanctity of *Mary*, we are then to turn our Eyes upon our ſelves, and ſee, whether we can Diſcover there a like ſubject of Joy: For if ſo wonderful were the diſpoſitions of the B. Virgin, to prepare her to be Mother of Chriſt; ſome proportion'd Degrees of theſe there ought to be in us too; ſince, tho' in a different manner, yet 'tis a dignity to which every Chriſtian is call'd, ſince in every Chriſtian *Chriſt is to be form'd.*

Gal.

Gal. 4. 19. [If we can find any suitable dispositions in us for this work of Grace, we may with reason rejoice; but if none such appear, this Solemnity of joy will be to us a Day of Confusion.] Look then on her and see what these dispositions are; A most profound Humility, a Spirit rais'd to God by Love and perfect Conformity to his Sacred Will. [By these her Soul was fitted, and she made choice of amongst all Women, to have Christ form'd in her, so to become the Mother of our Redeemer.] ~~Now~~ what say'st thou of thy self? How near comest thou to these so necessary dispositions for having Christ form'd in thee?

~~What hast thou of Humility? 1. Art thou fully~~ perswaded of thy Origin being from Nothing: That the Being, which God has given thee, is so frail, ~~and thou so little Master of it~~, that thou would'st every Moment return again to the same Nothing, if God's powerful Hand did not support thee; ~~that thy necessities are Universal~~; that thou art not able to do, say, or think any thing that is good; that by sin thou art many Degrees worse than nothing; and for thy rebellion against God, deservest to be depriv'd of all Grace and

Blessings, and to be abandon'd to all misery: That, as it is, thy Corruption and Weakness is so general, that thou scarce performest one good action, which has not a mixture of evil in it. So that whatever favourable thoughts thou may'st frame of thy self, thou art truly *Miser, & miserabilis, & pauper, & cæcus & nudus.* Wretched, Miserable, Poor, Blind, and Naked?

2. In consideration that thy Being is but Nothing, and Sin, hast thou thoughts of Disesteem and Contempt for thy self? Do'st thou ~~hold fast~~ these, when thou art commended? Or art thou any ways sensible of God's favors to thee; in imitation of the B. Virgin, who being rais'd to the highest Dignity, had the meanest thoughts of her self, Stiling her self the *Handmaid of our Lord*, when she was chosen for his Mother? Art thou convinc'd, that Sin being worse than Nothing, there's Nothing so contemptible as a Sinner? Does the daily experience of thy own weakness keep thee in the state of Abjection, and in the total distrust of thy self; there being not the least temptation, which, of thy self, thou art able to overcome? Doit thou regard, whatever Talents thou hast, as not thine, but

but the Gifts of God depoſited with thee, and therefore ſuch, as in Juſtice can be no ſufficient Grounds for entertaining any advantageous Thoughts of thy ſelf?

3. Canſt thou take one Step farther, and with S. *Paul*, rejoice in thy Infirmities; being pleas'd, in ſeeing thy ſelf worthy of Contempt? Canſt thou conceive it a Happineſs, that thou haſt this Cauſe of Humiliation, and ſincerely ſay, with the Prophet, *'Tis good, O Lord, that thou haſt humbled me?* In ſeeing others bleſs'd with greater Talents, and in a better State than thy ſelf, haſt thou rejoic'd and given Thanks? Or is this the Occaſion of Melancholy and Uneaſie Thoughts? Does the Senſe of thy Unworthineſs put thee in a Diſpoſition of accepting mean Employments before others, that are more honourable? Doſt thou patiently bear ſuch Faults and Imperfections in thy ſelf, which being no Offences againſt God, are the Occaſion of thy being leſs eſteem'd by Men, and therefore ought to be the Subject of thy Joy, rather than give thee any Diſturbance? Doſt thou avoid ſpeaking advantageouſly of thy ſelf? Canſt thou love their Company, where thou art leaſt eſteem'd?

Canst thou regard thy self with that Indifferency, as thou generally dost those Persons, who are Mean and Contemptible? Art thou content, thy Imperfections should be known? Or dost thou ever strive to cover them with vain Pretexts and Excuses? After having unfortunately offended God, is not thy Trouble greater for thy one Weakness, or that it will be known to others, than for having sinn'd against God? Canst thou freely pardon, and be easie with those, who have spoke to thy Disadvantage, and given thee Occasion of being Humbled? Dost thou consider Affronts, Injuries and Calumnies, as the best Remedy to moderate thy Self-love, and abate thy Pride; that being a Sinner, thou deserv'st it all, and that there's a necessity of passing thro' these Trials, to become conformable to Jesus Christ? Hast thou received them at least, as likewise all other Troubles, as coming from the just Hand of God, who permits them for thy Exercise, and his Glory; and dost thou pray for those, who have been the Instruments or Ministers of this Justice?

This is the Humility God regarded in the B Virgin, *Respexit humilitatem ancillæ*

ancilla ſuæ; If thou haſt obtain'd any degrees of this, thou haſt a ſolid Ground of Comfort, and Hopes of having Chriſt likewiſe form'd in thee: *Exaltavit humiles.* This is a Diſpoſition moſt ſuitable to Him, that is to be conceived and brought forth in thy Soul, and therefore the beſt, in order to the effect ſo much to be deſir'd, and ſo neceſſary for Chriſtians: For if thou conſider'ſt Him, tho' He was enrich'd with all the Perfections of His Father, yet, as Man, He acknowledges himſelf to be as nothing before the Sovereign Majeſty of God: *Subſtantia mea tanquam nihilum ante te.* He confeſſes himſelf to be the Reproach of the World, and the Outcaſt of Men: *Opprobrium hominum & abjectio plebis.* As a Worm of the Earth, and no Man. *Ego autem ſum vermis & non homo.* Tho' he had all the Pomp and Magnificence of the World at Command, yet He made choice of an Obſcure and Common Life; having ſo great a Love for Abjection, as to appear, even in the working of Miracles, and his Triumphs, in an humble Way: *Formam ſervi accipiens: Vidimus eum non habentem Speciem neque decorem: Nemini dixeritis.* And ſuffer'd all the Ignominy of his Paſſion and

and Cross with Joy: *Cum gaudio sustinuit crucem, confusione contempta* Looking upon it as his Life, to do the Will of his Father. *Meus cibus est ut faciam voluntatem Patris mei.*

Thus every way Humble is Christ our Lord; and that He may be formed in thee, how truly Humble must thou likewise be? Thou know'st He condemn'd the Pride of the *Pharisees*; and if thou liest under the same Indispositions, thou, with them, excludest Christ from thy Soul, ~~which cannot receive him except it be first prepar'd a fit Abode for such a Guest~~ Christ Humble, cannot dwell but in an Humble Heart: If thine be not so, how canst thou expect to be chosen with *Mary*, whose Humility was that, which God regarded, as the Motive of his Choice? See therefore how far thy Soul is unprepar'd; renounce all Pride, and pray for Victory over it. 'Tis true, it can never be so wholly subdued in this our Imperfect State, but thou wilt be still sensible of its Attempts to over-rule thee in almost all thou dost, and in this consists thy Exercise: But what then? If there be this Stubbornness in Pride, may there not be a like Constancy in Virtue, wherewith to frustrate its

its Designs? If it will not yield, neither yield thou to it; [it is Victory enough in our Case, not to be overcome; for this is the effect of a great Humility: Join therefore watchful Endeavors to thy Prayers; what thou canst not obtain at once, may be obtain'd by degrees: There are many Steps in Humility; begin at the first; this will help to raise thee, and give thee Hopes of coming to the top. As thou advancest ~~here,~~ so will the Love of God, ~~by proportion'd Degrees~~, encrease in thy Soul; so wilt thou be still more and more conformable to the Divine Will; these are the Dispositions for thy rejoicing in this Festival of Joy: For ~~as~~ God regards Humility, ~~so he has promised to~~ will abide with those, that love him, and declar'd, that whoever do the Will of his Father, they are His Mother, Brother, and Sister. [Thus thou seest, how the Dignity, thou honor'st in the B. Virgin, may, in some manner, belong to thee. Make some Advances towards it; beseech God to be thy Help, and pray the B. Virgin to join her Prayers with thine, that thou maist obtain of the Divine Bounty some degrees of that Virtue, which so much recommended her to God:

For

For it will be but a barren Feſtival to thee, if honoring Humility this Day, thou endeſt this Feſtival, with the ſame Pride, with which thou began'ſt it.

St. *Gorgonia*, *Decem.* 9.

SHE was Siſter to S. *Gregory Nazianzen*, and is deſcrib'd by him, as an Example of all Virtues, in the great Auſterity of her Life, the Mortification of her Senſes, the Contempt of all unneceſſary and vain Ornaments; in remarkable Silence, tho' having a particular Grace in ſpeaking; in Charity to the Afflicted and Poor; in the great Compoſure of her Mind, amidſt ſevere Trials, and moſt particularly in reclaiming her Husband, by the Powerful Perſwaſives of her Prudence and Piety, from his evil Ways, and gaining him to God; as likewiſe in the truly Chriſtian Education of her Children. And after ſuch a Life, what could be expected, but ſuch a Death, as is the Death of the Juſt? Let her Life be thy Inſtruction; it will be no Reproach, whatever thy Sex be. Obſerve, how the number of thy Sins encreaſe

creaſe from the undue Liberty of thy Senſes, from the Raſhneſs of thy Words, from ſeeking Eſteem, from thy Prodigality, Hard-heartedneſs, Impatience, and thy Indiſcretion under the Difficulties of Domeſtic Affairs: And from this Liſt, ſee, what thou haſt to ask for, this Day: Fail not in thy Petition; but when this is done, expect no help from God, if at the end of thy Prayer, thou art no more mindful of thy wants, but, with a uſual careleſneſs, lay'ſt thy ſelf open to all thy wonted Follies. Join Watchful and Laborious endeavors to thy Prayers; it was thus the Saints obtain'd Grace to overcome themſelves and the World. Do as they did, if thou expecteſt to be, what they are.

St. *Melchiades*, An. 313. *Dec.* 10.

1. HE was Biſhop of Rome in the time of *Maximian* the Emperor: Pray for the preſent Biſhop of that See, that God would pleaſe to aſſiſt him with a Special Grace anſwerable to his Charge, that he may be the Glory of the Church, and good Example to his Flock.

2. He

2. He ſuffer'd great Perſecution under the Emperor; and tho' he outliv'd his Perſecutor, and Died when Peace was reſtor'd to the Church, yet is he number'd amongſt the Martyrs: Pray for all thoſe, who are under any ſort of Perſecution, that God would give them the Spirit of Patience, Conſtancy and Meekneſs: Pray for thy ſelf, thou may'ſt improve in theſe Vir- under all Trials; and take Care while thou pretendeſt to Honor the Martyrs, thou Diſhonor not their Feſtival, by Paſſion or Impatience. If thou canſt happily overcome theſe Evils, and quietly ſubmit to thoſe Exerciſes of Trouble, which God is pleas'd to ordain for thy Portion, this will lay good Diſpoſitions in thy Soul, ſuch as will bring thee to the Reward of a Martyr, tho' thou art never call'd to ſhed thy Blood for Chriſt. Patience and Content under all Troubles are the Diſpoſitions of a Martyr; there's nothing wanting, but the Hand of the Executioner.

St. *Damaſus,*

St. *Damasus*, An. 384. *Dec.* 11.

Heb. 7. 23, 27. *Mat.* 24. 42, 47.

1. HE was Bishop of *Rome* in the time of St. *Jerome*: Pray for the present *Pope*, that, like this his Holy Predecessor, he may be eminent in all Virtue, and the careful discharge of all Duties, which belong to his State.

2. It was by his Care was Assembled the Second General Council, in which were condemn'd the *Errors* of *Macedonius* and *Eunomius*: Pray for the Reformation of all those *Errors*, by which the Doctrine of the Gospel is at this Day Corrupted. 'Tis in thy Power to help thy Neighbor to the Truth, by thy good *Example*: See, whether thou hast not, by thy disorders, given Scandal to many, and made the *Enemies* of God Blaspheme: What satisfaction canst thou now make, but by endeavoring to render an Hundredfold, by the remarkable *Exemplarity* of a regular and well Disciplin'd Life? As many as have taken a dislike to the Truth,

Truth, from the Scandal of thy Liberties, their Souls will be demanded at thy Hands; as many as have been drawn into Sin by thy Example or Authority, will be charg'd on thy account: Pray for them all, this Day, that by obtaining for them the Succors of Divine Grace, thou may'ſt make ſome Recompence for the injury done them.

SS. *Epimachus*, *Alexander*, and other Martyrs, *Decem.* 12.

THeſe were Chriſtians of *Alexandria*, who in the Perſecution rais'd by *Decius* the Emperor, ſtood Conſtant in the Profeſſion of their Faith, ſuffer'd a long Impriſonment, and being at length brought forth, were Scourg'd, Cut with Razors, and afterwards by the Fire releas'd from the Hands of their Perſecutors to a better Liberty, than what this World could give: And this, at a time, when Cruelty of Torments, and the Fear of loſing what is Preſent, had prevail'd on many to Renounce their Faith. 'Tis an eaſie thing to read of the Martyrs Sufferings, to encourage others to ſuffer with Patience,

tience, as likewise to resolve upon a Peaceable Submission to whatever Trials God shall send. All this has been done by those, who being call'd forth, have proved Deserters. Trust not thou to such Flattering Thoughts: If thou didst but know thy self better, thou would'st not Trust thy self so much. Depend then on the Assistance of Heaven, and prepare for it, by the Practice of Humility, Patience, and a Peaceable Submission, under such difficulties as daily fall to thy Lot: For if thou Rebellest against God in these, how wilt thou be Faithful in greater? Thus many deceive themselves; but if thou wilt not be of that Number, let thy Preparation begin from this Day, and shew thy Patience in the next Trial that happens.

St. *Lucy*, An. 299. *Decem.* 13.

2 *Cor.* 10. 17. 11. 2. *Mat.* 13. 44, 52.

1. SHE was a Holy Virgin: Pray for all that live in the Profession of this State. 1. She obtain'd leave of her Mother, to Sell what was settled for

for her Portion, and gave it to the Poor: Pray for all that are under the Temptations of their Youthful Age, when Vanity, Self-love, Curiosity, Prodigality, Levity, and the Immoderate Desire of being esteem'd, press with greatest Violence upon them: When the Solicitude of pleasing themselves Diminishes the Compassion due to their Neighbors; Pray for Remedy against all the Indiscretions and Follies of that unsettled Age: That they may ever remember, they are Dust and Clay, and into that must soon return; that they are made for another World, and not for this; that a little given to the Poor is much more to the purpose, than all they lay out upon themselves, while all this *Expence* is only to Court the World which ought to be forsaken, rather than ador'd; and the other is to purchase an *Eternal* Rest. 3. Being accus'd for believing in Christ, and commanded by the Judge to be carried to a place of Infamy, where Violence might be us'd upon her, for Corrupting both Body and Soul; God was pleas'd in a wonderful manner to deliver her, by rendring her immovable, so that all the Strength of Man and Beasts was not able to remove her from the place where

where She ſtood. And haſt thou not reaſon to beg of God, to Manifeſt his wonderful Power in thee, that thou may'ſt be more Firm and Immovable, than thou generally art? Conſider how eaſily thou art prevail'd on to forſake thy good Purpoſes and Duty? What force have Intereſt, Pleaſure, Vanity and Company upon thee? How little is ſufficient to draw thee from thy Prayers, to put off other Duties, and make thee Tranſgreſs the Rules of Order, Temperance and good Diſcipline? As much then as thou wanteſt of Chriſtian Steddineſs, pray for this Day; and ſee, the Fervor of thy Prayers be proportion'd to thy wants. 4. Thus by the Divine Power She withſtood all their Attempts, out liv'd the Flames, with which they had encompas'd her, and at length finiſh'd her Martyrdom by the Sword. Here are great Leſſons taught thee by a Tender Virgin: The Fire and Sword had not Terror enough in them to fright her from her Duty; She had firſt given away her Goods, and now ſhe's willing to give her Life a Sacrifice to God. And canſt thou do thus? Examin thy daily Practice, and ſee how little of thy Inclinations thou art willing

ling to leave for God; How then wilt thou give thy Life? How wilt thou ſtand againſt Torments when petty Flatteries make thee yield, and thou canſt not yet bear the uneaſineſs of an Ordinary Self-denial, or Contradicted Paſſion? Pray then and Practiſe ſomething this Day; try if St. *Lucy*'s Flame will give thee any Courage.

Ember-Week.

WEdneſday, Friday and Saturday, after St. *Lucy*, being *Ember* Days, obſerve them according to the Spirit of the Church, in Faſting, Humiliation and Prayer. Beg a Bleſſing on the Fruits of the Earth, and Pray for all thoſe, who at this time, are promoted to Holy Orders, that they may be worthy Miniſters of the Church.

St *Nicaſius*, *Decem.* 14.

BIſhop of *Rhemes*, who in the Fifth Century, when the *Wandals* had over-run *France*, by a particular Cruelty expreſſing

expreſſing their Averſion to the Chriſtians, and had now reduced his People by a Siege to the laſt Extremity, encourag'd them to ſubmit to the Scourge, which their Sins had provok'd, and by a Temporal Death, to endeavor to prevent an Eternal; and then opening the Gates, he fell the firſt Sacrifice to the Cruelty of the *Barbarians*, and by his Death taught his Flock to Die. If there were no other Enemies, but ſuch as threaten Death, thou might'ſt not be every Day in Apprehenſion of them; but ſince the greateſt Enemies of thy Soul are in Time of Peace, and then thou art moſt in danger, when War and Violence ſeem fartheſt off; ſince the Flatteries of Friends and the World bring as certain Death, as the Sword, learn to ſtand Arm'd, when thou art in the midſt of Peace; and however all kinds of Worldly Enjoyments are call'd Bleſſings, let them be ſuſpected by thee as no leſs a Scourge than Perſecution, a Scourge which Blinding the Chriſtian's Eyes, makes him Fearleſs in danger, and often carries him to thoſe Extravagancies, by which he unnaturally becomes his own Executioner. Beſeech God to deliver thee from all ſuch Blindneſs; pray

pray for Patience under all Perſecution; pray for Diſcretion and Moderation in Time of Peace; the danger is here greater, tho' not ſo terrible.

St. *Euſebius*, An. 371. *Decem.* 15.

1. HE was a Biſhop: Pray for all the Biſhops in God's Church: Thoſe, who reflect how much God is diſhonour'd, and how conſiderably the Faithful ſuffer, thro' the Weakneſs, Ambition and Ill-Example of ſuch as, unworthy of that Dignity, ſit in the Epiſcopal Chair, will not be wanting in this Devotion, in behalf of the Public. Who knows, but if all the Faithful did conſtantly join in preſenting their moſt hearty Petitions to Almighty God on this Subject, as often as the Feſtivals of H. Prelates return upon them throughout the Year, he might deliver the Church from this Evil, and Bleſs it with a Holy Succeſſion of ſuch Paſtors, who by Word and Example might be as ſo many Lights to the Faithful, to Conduct them to a happy Eternity?

2. He was a Martyr; Pray for Patience in all Sufferings for thy ſelf and all others.

others, who are under any Trials. If thou Honour'ſt a Martyr, ſuffer ſomething this Day with more than ordinary Meekneſs. Conſider, how often thou art in Paſſion, how eaſily thou art Diſquieted, how inconſiderable a thing provokes thee; how ordinary Temptations overcome thee: Are theſe the Steps of a Martyr? Is this according to the Goſpel? Bluſh then and be confounded at thy Weakneſs, and Pray for New Strength.

Many Holy Virgins, Decem. 16.

THey were Sacred Victims Sacrificed by the Cruelty of *Hunnericus* King of the *Wandals*, who Perſecuting the Church in *Africa*, forc'd into the Baniſhment of a Horrid Deſart about Five Thouſand Chriſtians, Biſhops, Prieſts, Deacons, and others of the Faithful, but Seizing on all ſuch Virgins, as he found Conſecrated to God, commanded them to be Hang'd up in the Air, and Tormenting them with Hot Plates of Iron, bid them own that they had been abus'd by their Biſhops and Church-men; hoping by this Cruelty to Caſt a Blemiſh on the Church,

and Color his Barbarity with the Pretext of Juſtice; but they chuſing Death, rather than to Purchaſe Life by offending againſt Juſtice and Truth, Died under his Torments. Give Thanks for their Conſtancy and Courage, and wonder not, if the Enemies of thy Faith, by like Scandals, endeavor to bring the Church into diſrepute: Chriſt himſelf Suffer'd the Infamy of ſuch Reproaches; and if his Members are render'd Odious by the ſame Expedients of Malice, 'tis for the encreaſe of their Crown. Learn to bear with Patience the Aſſaults of all kinds of Evil Tongues: The Malice or Indiſcretion of others often put thee to the Trial; but nothing of this can hurt thee: The only Miſchief is from thy own Impatient Reſentments. Prevent theſe by a better Spirit, and pray, this Day, for whatever is wanting to thee, for preſerving thy inward Peace.

St. *Olympias*, Widow, *Dec.* 17.

Liv'd at *Conſtantinople* in the Time of S. *Chryſoſtom*; her Husband having been Dead ſome Time, the Emperor *Theodoſius*

Theodosius propos'd to her the Marriage of *Elpidius* his near Relation; to whom She answer'd; that God having taken away her Husband, because She was not fit for the necessary Condescendences of that State, She was resolv'd no more to engage in it. She was true to her Resolution, and employ'd both her Money and Time in the Relief of Widows, Orphans, and of the Sick: Her Austerities were Great, her Habit Mean, her Humility Edifying, her Tears Continual; and that nothing might be wanting to consummate her Virtue, She was Persecuted by *Arcadius*, for espousing the Cause of Oppress'd Innocence, in the Person of her Pastor, S. *John Chrysostom*, and for this being forced into Banishment, Death open'd her a way to a better Country which She had long desir'd. Make use of this Example, as thy State requires; there are difficulties in all Conditions, and even that, which has the Name of the greatest Liberty, cannot well be Christian, but with the Self-denials of the Cloyster. If Humility and Charity help'd her to Heaven, will not Prodigality and Vanity shut thee out from it? Take not thy Measures from the World, but from the Gospel, and then

tell me, who has given thee Power so much to dispence with it. Follow the Gospel, if thou hopest to come to the Promises of the Gospel.

St. *Rufus* and *Sozimus*, Martyrs, *December* 18.

THey were of the number of those Disciples, by whose Labors the Faith was Planted amongst the *Hebrews* and *Greeks*, and their Martyrdom is Recorded by St. *Polycarp*, the Disciple of St. *John* Evangelist, who equals them with the great St. *Ignatius*, Martyr, to whom he joins these Two, and encourages his People to suffer with Patience, by their Example, and in Hopes of their Reward. And hast thou nothing to learn from them? If Preaching the Gospel be not thy Province; is it not thy Duty, at least, to espouse the Cause of Virtue, Piety, Justice, and Truth? Are not these often injur'd in thy Presence, by the undue Liberties or Rashness of those, with whom thou Converse'st? And does not Fear or Shame often make thee Connive at, if not Favor, the Aggressors? Is this the

the Spirit of the Martyrs, to let Human Respects take place of Duty, to let the Cause of God suffer, for Fear of disobliging Company, and being thought Uncivil? I do not encourage Roughness, if not absolutely necessary; but Advise thee to shew thy Breeding by a Meek Reproof of what deserves it, and by being Moderate under Passion, if by such Reproof it be provok'd against thee. This is the Civility, which the Gospel teaches, and 'tis that which will gain Respect, encrease thy Friends, and open thee a Way to Heaven.

St. *Nemesius*, Martyr, *Decem.* 19.

IN the Persecution of *Decius*, he was accus'd at *Alexandria* of Theft, by such Enemies of his Faith, whose Malice suggested this way for Destroying both his Life and Reputation: But his Innocence being proved, his Faith in Christ was soon after made his Crime, and for this was condemn'd to the Flames, in the Company of Thieves. False Accusations are a Severe Trial, and therefore let not thy Charity be

wanting in Praying for such as are under it: And for thy self, consider seriously upon it; Reproach, Ignominy and Disgrace were one of the Evils, to which Christ himself submitted, and being Sanctified in his Sacred Person, may be to thee a Sanctification, if thou receivest them in the Spirit; that is, with the Patience, Charity and Meekness of Jesus Christ. It is very allowable, in such Case, with Moderation and Peace, to justifie thy self; but if thy Plea be not receiv'd, then is the time to Join thy self to Christ, and Imitate his Humility and Silence, in Submitting to the Scourge, God is p'eas'd to lay upon thee, which may be Just from his Hand, tho' not from them, who appear against thee. Let this be thy Rule, and permit not every Ordinary Provocation of this kind to fill thy Mind with Resentments and Passion: For this is unworthy of thy Profession, and will be the loss of that Advantage God puts into thy Hands. Pray for this Grace, prepare for it, and see, that this be thy Practice, when the Trial comes.

Vigil *of St.* Thomas. *Decemb.* 20.

Eccles. 44. 26. 25. 10. *Jo.* 15. 12, 16.

KEep such a Fast, as may be acceptable to God, in Humiliation and Self-denial: If thou abstainest from Flesh, and yet findest ways to court thy Appetite, commit Excesses, and indulge thy self in all thy usual Liberties, will this be a good preparation for the Blessings of Heaven? Endeavor in this point to Reform thy self and others.

It being likewise the Day of St. Philogonus,

BIshop of *Antioch*, whose great Sanctity is set forth by St. *Chrysostom*, not only for opposing *Arius*, but likewise for all those eminent Virtues, which are the Ornaments of that great Dignity: Pray for all the Prelates of God's Church, that by his Example, they may be so many Lights of the World, in dissipating the Darkness of Error and Vice. The common Interest of the

Flock, is in their Zealous and Exemplary Piety; and therefore all ought to join in petitioning God for the degree of Grace necessary for their Conduct. And since St. *Chrysostom*, in his Discourse on this Saint, presses all Religions to join in this Charity, the Cause being so general a Good, and the Solicitor so great a Saint, who knew the weight of the Charge, I hope they will not be wanting in it.

St. *Thomas*, *December* 21.

Ephes. 2. 19, 22. *Jo.* 20. 24, 29.

1 HE was an Apostle of Jesus Christ: Pray for all the Pastors of God's Church, who succeed in his Function.

2. He propagated the Gospel amongst the Barbarous Nations of the East: Pray for all those People, who are again Relaps'd into Idolatry, that God would be pleas'd to visit them: Pray for Constancy for thy self.

3. He was Incredulous in the Point of Christ's Resurrection: Pray for all those who are Incredulous, who are Obstinate in their Errors; for all likewise,

wise, who thro' Weakness, or Temptation, are disturb'd with Doubts in Faith.

4. He was a Martyr: Pray for Constancy and Patience for all that suffer for Justice and Truth: Pray for all those, who are visited with any Affliction, whether Temporal or Spiritual.

It is not recorded in Scripture how St *Thomas* was call'd to the Apostleship; but the indispensible Condition of an Apostle being to leave all and Follow Christ, it cannot be question'd, but he did so. This was the perfection of their State, who were chosen to spread the Gospel throughout the World, and carry Christ's Name before Kings and Princes. They were to renounce the Earth, that they might be, without distractions, wholly attentive to the business of Heaven, and give evident proof of their having no other Interest, but in Jesus Christ alone. There are now many Successors in this Function of preaching the Gospel, and they are truly happy ones, who, with the Spirit of this Apostle, seek nothing in the manifold discharge of their Duty, but Jesus Christ. They who seek him thus, will certainly find him both for themselves and others: But if

Christ and his Gospel be only the Cover, and Church-men make use of this to seek themselves; these have a Mercenary and Hireling Spirit, and by preying upon the Flock, betray the Wolf under the Pastor's Weed. This Character belongs to such Pastors, who prostitute their whole Function to their own private Interest; but this, I hope, is the Condition of few. I wish their Number were not greater, who, in appearance, being no ways wanting to their Duty, carry with them, however, a worldly and covetous Spirit, such as puts them upon being hard to the Poor, and makes them eagerly grasp at every thing, that is for their advantage. 'Tis true, Pastors being Men, and like others, subject to many wants, it must be allow'd them to make provision; but still this ought to be done in such a way, as may express their want but not their love of Money; their Treasure is to be in another World, and not in this; and if they are too earnest in heaping here, it too plainly shews, where their Heart is. Christ making choice of Men, who forsook all, is an instruction to their Successors, that they ought not to desire and seek all; and truly 'tis a very dis-

edifying

edifying thing to see those, who inherit the Apostolick Power, to renounce their Spirit, and instead of making Christ their Portion, to be, above others, most solicitous for the things of this World. Remove this Scandal, I beseech thee, O God, and grant, that they who undertake to teach the Gospel, may live by its Principles, and being Guides to a better World, may not by their ill Example, encourage their Flock to be in love with this.

This Apostle having once undertaken to follow Christ, continued faithful to him, and gave sufficient evidence of his Sincerity, when apprehending his Master's Life to be in danger, by his going up to *Jerusalem*, and all the other Apostles dissuading him from it, he alone cry'd out; *Eamus & moriamur cum illo. Let us go and die with him.* This was the Test of a true Disciple, not to think of leaving Christ, when dangers threaten'd, but readily to offer himself to take part with his Master in all his Sufferings. Every Follower of Christ must endeavor to observe this Rule. They are not only to be faithful in their Duties to him, when 'tis consistent with their Interest, Reputation, Quiet, and Spiritual Comfort;

fort; ~~for all this may be suspected.~~ But likewise continue their Fidelity there, where they foresee, they are likely to be Sufferers or Losers by it. If a Christian always tells Truth, when 'tis to his purpose; and defends himself by Lies, when he apprehends the Truth will prove Disadvantageous to him; is such an one a true Disciple; or can he say, let us go and Die with Christ, who is thus unwilling to suffer any thing for him? If a Christian observes the Rules of Exact Sobriety and Discipline, when left to his own Conduct, and rather than bear their railery, joins with those, who importune him to Disorder and Excess: If for fear of being pointed at, he follows a Corrupt World in all its Prodigality, Vanity and Luxury: If he wou'd serve his Neighbor, could it be done without Trouble: If his Desires be to live virtuously and justly, but the apprehension of Wanting puts him upon Ways, that are unjustifiable: If he would observe Peace with his Neighbors, but cannot bear their Impertinent and Disagreeable Humors: If he wou'd ask Pardon for Injuries done, but cannot submit to the Humiliation, or to the Thought of being reputed

Poor-

Poor-Spirited and Tame, &c. Can such as these pretend to the Character of being Christ's Disciples, who, thus upon the prospect of any difficulty or uneasiness, abandon his Cause, and so far forsake him? A Christian ought ever to be in a Disposition of Dying with Christ, 'tis part of this Day's Lesson; he is to follow him even to Death; what then if he meets with the ordinary Discouragements, which commonly work by raising Fear or Shame? If he cannot overcome these, how will he do it, when they are accompanied with the Terrors of Racks and Death? He that Surrenders himself to a weak Enemy, how can he Hope to be Victorious when Assaulted with a much greater Force? Strive therefore daily to be Constant to all thy Duties; accustom thy self to Force thy Way, upon meeting with Opposition; let not Fear or Shame prevail on thee to the Omission of any Obligation, have no regard to what the World will say of thee: Look on Difficulties, Troubles, Temptations, Disquiets, &c. as Part of thy Portion, and an Exercise of this Life, to which God has call'd thee: Be not therefore overnice, nor unwilling to take Pains, nor

affraid to Suffer: This will bring thee by degrees to the Disposition of a true Disciple: and if God shall call thee to greater Trials, thou may'st be in Hopes of offering thy self with the Resolution of this Apostle, and say, Let us go and Die with our Suffering Lord.

2° But however great was the Virtue of this Apostle, in forsaking all to follow Christ, and offering himself to go and Die with him; yet behold still in him a great Argument of Human Weakness; he refuses to believe Christ's Resurrection, and declares his Resolution of continuing Obstinate in his unbelief, except God condescending to his Weakness, shall remove it in the manner as prescrib'd by him. What is a Christian to do here, but profoundly Humble himself in the Sight of God; for if in Men, who had renounc'd the World, had been bred up under the Discipline of Christ, and were ready to Die with him, there appears such Infirmity; how ought others be Apprehensive, who besides the common Frailty of a Corrupt Nature, have so many other Reasons to distrust themselves, and be jealous of such Miscarriages? 'Tis here then they are bound to acknowledge their universal dependance on God, sub-

ject

ject themselves entirely to his Protection, and having earnestly implor'd his Assistance for this Poor helpless Clay, resolve never to provoke that Hand, by wilful Sin, from whence all their Strength is to come.

Another Lesson we may learn from the unbelief of this Apostle, That exemplar and well-meaning Christians may be subject to Obstinacy and Errors in Faith; that they may be positive in taking very wrong Ways for coming to the Knowledge of the Truth, and make Opposition against the Way God has chosen and ordain'd for their direction: That therefore, notwithstanding all the Regularity of their Lives, they are oblig'd to consider, whether the Method they take for their security against all Errors in Faith, be Subject to Errors, or a safe Bar against them, such as Christ has appointed, and is most conformable to him, who is the Eternal Truth.

There is one way, which this Apostle requir'd for his satisfaction, and that was *Seeing* and *Feeling*, before he would believe: Now tho' Christ's Goodness was such to him, as to Comply with his Infirmity, for the Cure of his Unbelief, yet this was not the Method

Method ordain'd by Christ for the whole World: He requir'd all Nations to Believe to the End of the World, and being Ascended to his Father, render'd it impossible to them to come to this Faith by *Seeing* or *Feeling*; and in pronouncing those Blessed, who Believe and See not, declar'd it his Will, that Christians should Believe without Seeing. The Method therefore of a Christian's Faith is not that, which is here reprov'd in S. *Thomas*, but what is commended by Christ; and the Motive of their Believing is not to come from the Assurance given them from their Seeing or Feeling, for this is not Believing God, but Believing their Hands or their Eyes; but it is to come from the Assurance given by God; and being thus founded, not on these Sences, but on the Divine Authority, their Faith becomes Divine: Being therefore duly inform'd, what God has said, True Christians presently assent; they Hear and Believe; and this is the Method describ'd by S. *Paul*, who says, *Faith comes by Hearing*. Their concern therefore is not curiously to enquire into the nature of the things propos'd from God, and upon finding them square with their Reason, their Imagination,

or

or their Senſes, upon this Condition to accept them; for this is to Subject Divine Authority to Human Senſe, 'tis to appeal from God to Man; as if Divine Truths ſtood in need of the Approbation of Private Reaſon: But they, upon a ſufficient Teſtimony of being Truths deliver'd from God, readily Embrace them and Believe; for whether they are Myſteries proportion'd to their Reaſon, or no; yet they know, 'tis always moſt reaſonable they ſhould believe God; eſpecially in things belonging to him. *Believe God*, is the Firſt and moſt indiſputable Maxim of Chriſtian Reaſon; and to doubt of what he teaches, on pretext of the thing Contradicting our Reaſon, is to act againſt Reaſon, in pretending to Maintain its Right. Since therefore Chriſt has ordain'd a Church on Earth to bear Teſtimony of him, and inſtruct the whole World in his Truths, and ſo emnly engag'd his Sacred Word, it ſhall be ever aſſiſted by his Holy Spirit, and taught the Truth to the End of the World, and declar'd, that the disbelieving, or being obſtinate againſt it, is the ſame Crime as to disbelieve God himſelf; therefore the Chriſtian Method of Believing, is to Hear what Chriſt's

Christ's Church teaches and believe; 'tis the Way appointed by Christ, whereby the whole World was to be inform'd of his Truths; to doubt of any Point, on pretext of being Unreasonable, is to act against Reason; 'tis to doubt, whether God, be Truth, or whether Christ's Promise be True. 'Tis to fix the Centre and Measure of Divine Truths in Human Reason, and not in God: So that instead of concluding, *This is from God, therefore it is most Reasonable and True*; 'tis turning all the wrong way; and whenever Private Reason shall say, *This is not Reasonable*; *it likewise says*; *therefore it is not from God, nor True*: Which is beginning at the wrong End; 'tis setting up every Private Reason to be Judge of Divine Truths; 'tis laying a ground for an endless and irremediable Division; since Private Capacities being different, their Judgments must necessarily be so too: And therefore cannot possibly be the Way Establish'd by Christ, who requiring Unity in Faith amongst all Believers, could not appoint a Method Destructive of all Unity. The Unity of Faith requir'd in Christ's Church must therefore come from God; he is the Fountain and Essential Unity; from

from him must flow all other Unity: And thus he has order'd it. His Truths are Eternal and Unchangeable; he has Establish'd a Church, to deliver these Truths from him to the whole World. This Church carries with it the Authority and Security of God's Spirit: All Private Judgments ought to be over-rul'd by this Authority, and submit; hence there's a Unity in Faith throughout the World; and this Faith comes by Hearing: S. *Thomas* ought to have heard the Apostles; and all others are to hear the Catholic Church of their Times: And thus whatever is the difference of Private Judgments, all meet in one Faith. *He that hears you, hears me: He that hears us, is of God; and he that hears us not, is not of God; in this we know the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Error.*

St. *Flavian*, Martyr, *Dec.* 22.

A Noble *Roman*, who, by order of *Julian* the Apostate, had his Face disfigur'd with those Marks of Infamy, the usual Punishment of Thieves and Malefactors; and being afterwards cast forth

forth into Baniſhment, there giving himſelf wholly to Prayer, prepar'd for that Life, for which he had contemn'd all that is in this. The Feſtival of Martyrs return often upon thee, that thou may'ſt give Glory to the Head of Martyrs, and learn ſomething of this Spirit. And what Advance haſt thou made? How doſt thou bear Reproaches and Contempts? How doſt thou Submit to the daily Difficulties of thy State; to the Diſtempers and Pains, with which God is pleas'd to Viſit thee? How doſt thou bear the Trouble of thy own Infirmities and Indiſcretion? Reſentments, Impatience, Paſſion, may be thy Inclination, but ought not to be allow'd in Practice, if thou think'ſt to walk by the Copies ſo often ſet before thee. Stand then with Reſolution againſt all ſuch Weakneſs, and whenever they ſeem to Work upon thee, Retire into a Corner, and there begging the Patience of the Martyrs, bend down thy Neck to the Trouble, whatever it be, that ſo thou may'ſt come to the Practice of what thou Profeſſeſt.

St. *Ser-*

St. *Servulus*, *Decem.* 23.

A Poor Man in *Rome*, who, from his Infancy, being ſtruck with the Palſie, and thus render'd incapable of all Work, was brought every Day to the Gate of S *Clement*'s Church, there to beg for Alms. The Charity of this Beggar was very Remarkable, in Diſtributing every Day to other Poor, whatever Alms he receiv'd above what ſatisfied the Neceſſities of the Day; only ſparing ſo much as ſerv'd for the purchace of a Bible, in which, tho' Ignorant of all other things, he was very well inſtructed, by deſiring ſuch, as came to Viſit him, to Read to him. Having liv'd many Years in this Method, and in the Practice of a cheerful Patience, he gave up his Spirit to God, who atteſted his Sanctity by filling the Room with a Sweet Odor, which continued till his Interment, as 'tis related by S. *Gregory* the Great in a Sermon, who receiv'd the Relation from Perſons then living, who had been Witneſſes of it. Learn the great Advantage, that may be made of Sickneſs, Pain

Pain and Poverty. By the good use of these, this Saint made his Way to Heaven: And will not he rise in Judgment against thee, for thy Impatience in lesser Trials; for thy Ignorance occasion'd by the Ill use of thy Time and Health; for wasting in Vanity and Entertainments, what might have been the Food of the Poor? Look over thy Accounts, and seeing how much, with thy Plenty and Health, thou art behind him, who had neither, think of reforming, for thus only canst thou prevent the Consequence of thy past Ill Management.

Christmas-Eve, Decem. 24.

Rom 1. 1, 6. *Mat.* 1. 18, 21.

THis Day is a Preparation for one of the Greatest Festivals of the Year, a Festival of Infinit Mercy and Goodness. On the effects of this Mercy depends thy Eternal Good; prepare then for it in the best manner thou art able; join Contrition with thy Fasting, and a most profound Humiliation of Spirit: Confess thy manifold weakness

neſs and unworthineſs; He that comes to be thy Phyſician, will be pleas'd with the Sincere Acknowledgment of thy Infirmities.

THis *Vigil* has been kept from the Time of the Apoſtles, and in the Primitive Ages, with ſuch Exactneſs, that a Neglect of it was reputed Criminal. S. *Auguſtin* remov'd a Prieſt from amongſt his Clergy, for being wanting in the Obſervance of it, and for Breaking his Faſt. S. *Gregory* of *Tours* gives particular Inſtances of God's Diſpleaſure againſt ſome, who had little regard to it. It cannot be queſtion'd, but there is a great Provocation in their diſorder, who now haſte from the Altar to their Entertainments, very unbecoming the Sanctity of the Time, and too often Prophaning it with Irreverence and Exceſſes. Avoid theſe, and if neceſſity obliges thee to take any Relief, let it be with great Moderation, without Noiſe or Converſation, that ſo thy Soul may not be diſturb'd, but be at full Liberty for Entertaining thy Lord, and Acknowledging all his Mercies.

Chriſtmas-

Chriſtmas-Day, Decem. 25.

Tit. 2. 11, 15. *Tit.* 3. 4, 7. *Heb.* 1. 1, 12. *Luke* 2. 1, 14. *Luke* 2. 15, 20. *Jo.* 1. 1, 14.

ON a Day, when God the Father ſpeaks to us by his Only Son, the Eternal Word, *Locutus eſt nobis in Filio*; it cannot be leſs than Preſumption for Man to ſpeak; who ought rather in Silence give ear to what is ſpoke to him from Heaven, and with admiration Contemplate the Wonders and Mercies of this Day; a Day, when the Second Perſon of the B. Trinity made Man in the Womb of the Virgin *Mary*, was Born of her ~~in the Manger of~~ *Bethlehem*, and came ~~in this humble manner~~ to be the World's Redeemer. Approach then in Spirit, Chriſtian Soul, to the Manger; ſtand there awhile, and opening thy Breaſt, receive the Inſtructions he thence gives thee.

I.

But firſt, whilſt thou hear'ſt the Angels ſaluting him with a Celeſtial Hymn,

Hymn, and seest the Shepherds, inform'd from Heaven, making their Offerings, and Adoring him for their God, join thou with them, and confess him to be thine.

O Jesus, I here bow down before Thee, and acknowledge Thee to be my Lord and my God; Thou art the Eternal Son of the Father; Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ, I Adore and Bless thy Holy Name, who, for thy Redemption hast been pleas'd to become Man: I offer Thee my Heart and Soul, beseeching thee to purifie them by thy Grace, that thro' thee they may become an Acceptable Present, in thy Sight.

II.

Behold him, and learn, how much thou art Indebted to the Goodness of thy God, and the Infinit Mercy of thy Redeemer: The whole World lay under the Guilt of Sin, and nothing but an Eternal Banishment from the Sight of God, join'd with Everlasting Punishment, was the unavoidable Consequence of such a Guilt. Man was lost, and being, thro' Sin an Enemy to God, it was not in his power to reverse his Fate: For what could Rebellious Clay do to satisfie an injur'd God?

The Debt is Infinit, and the unhappy Debtor Poor of himself, thro' his Offence, is become still more Miserable, Wretched, and worse than nothing: And tho' there wants no Mercy ready to forgive, yet there is Justice too, which must be satisfied. What Remedy then for Man, but to be deliver'd to the Executioner, and cast into Prison, there to abide Miserable for ever? And thus it was to be. But behold the Mercy of thy Redeemer; the Second Person of the B Trinity offers himself to become Man, that so he might be capable of being made a Sacrifice for the Sins of Men, a Sacrifice of Infinit Value, and more than equal to the Guilt: For this End, when the Fulness of time was come, ordain'd by God for the Accomplishment of this Work of Mercy, he is Born of the Virgin *Mary* an Infant, and yet True God and Man; this is the Mystery, this the Mercy the Church at present Commemorates, and thou with Love and Gratitude art humbly to Adore.

O Jesus, I Adore ~~thee~~, and give ~~thee~~ Thanks for ~~this~~ ~~thy~~ Infinit Mercy, in being thus pleas'd to undertake our Redemption. What ~~had I~~ been but part of that ~~Damned~~ Mass, eternally condemned excluded

I can have

excluded from Heaven, a despairing ~~Soul~~ amidst Everlasting Flames! But ~~thou art come~~ to be my Deliverer, and make ~~my~~ Peace with our offended God; ~~Thou~~ offer'st ~~thy self~~ to Death, an Innocent Lamb, that I ~~a~~ Rebellious and Sinful Slave, might be capable of Eternal Life. What shall I say, O my God; what returns shall I make for all ~~thy~~ Favors? ~~I will~~ in silence Admire and Adore ~~thy~~ Mercy: ~~I will~~ Bless ~~thy~~ Name for ever. Blessed be our Lord God of *Israel*, because he has Visited and Redeem'd his People, and rais'd to us a powerful Savior, who shall deliver us from our Enemies, and from the Hands of all that Hate us; that without fear we may serve him in Holiness and Justice all our Days, that we may be enlighten'd who sit in Darkness, and our Feet be directed in the Way of Peace. Praise our Lord all you Nations, all you People Bless our Lord.

III.

And now, in beholding this wonder of Goodness, do not ~~thou~~ see likewise, what reason ~~thou hast~~ to Hope and Place ~~thy~~ whole Confidence in God? When ~~thou~~ consider'st ~~thy self~~, and discover'st nothing there, but Weak-

ness and repeated Relapses into Sin, 'tis enough to make thee tremble and despair: But viewing here, how Infinit is the Tenderness and Compassion of God, and how great things he has done for thy Salvation, hast not thou in this sufficient Motives to raise thy Hopes, trust in this Mercy, and rejoice in so Plentiful a Redemption? 'Tis now evident, God wills not the Death of a Sinner, who has done so much to regain him Life. And how canst thou fear, he will refuse thee Mercy, who has given thee his Only Son, thro' whom thou may'st obtain it? What is yet to come, is much less than what he has already done. for thee: It being much more wonderful for God to become Man, than for a Sinner to find Mercy thro' such a Redeemer. God will not leave his Work imperfect: Hope then, and let not thy Hopes end, but with thy Life.

In thee I put my trust, O Blessed Redeemer, and tho' my Blindness and repeated Transgressions often oppress me with Fear and Dejection; yet now having thee my Advocate to the Father, all thy Humiliations and Sufferings to Plead for me, however I may despair of my self, I will ever trust in thee.

My

My Sins I confeſs are great; but infinitly greater is thy Goodneſs and Mercy: What can I fear, when thou appear'ſt for me, and ſtandeſt betwixt me and my God, whom I have offended? Rejoice then, my Soul, in God thy Savior, and ever remember thoſe Words of Comfort; *Whoever truſts in him, ſhall not be confounded for ever.*

IV.

And does not this Goodneſs of God towards Man, teach ~~thee~~ the great Obligation ~~thou~~ haſt of Loving God with all ~~thy~~ Heart, and with all ~~thy~~ Soul? For what could God do more for ~~thee~~, than here he has done? Conſider this Myſtery yet again: ~~Thou~~ ſay'ſt ~~thou~~ Believeſt it; but ~~haſt thou~~ ever ſeriouſly reflected upon what ~~thou~~ believeſt? ~~Haſt thou~~ ever thought, how Infinit muſt the Love of God be, in ſending his Only Son to become Man, to expoſe him to all, that is here Contemptible, and after Cruel Torments, to Die upon a Croſs; and all this, that Man might be ſav'd, that Sinful Duſt and Aſhes might be exalted to Glory? And is there not here in this, even in that Poor manner as ~~thou~~ conſiderſt it, ſomething wonderful and worthy of

~~thy~~ Love? Bluſh then and be confounded at all ~~thy~~ paſt ingratitude and inſenſibility, who having ſo much to Love in God, yet love~~ſt~~ him ſo little. What if all the Moments of ~~thy~~ Life had been employ'd in giving ~~thy~~ Heart to him, it had been much ſhort of what is due; but now having given him ſo very few or none, what can~~ſt~~ ~~thou~~ ſay, but bewail ~~thy~~ Miſery, and profeſs, ~~thou~~ ſtand~~eſt~~ in need of all the Mercy of ~~thy~~ God? Make ſome amends however now, and fix this Thought ſo deep within ~~thy~~ Soul, that thou may'ſt be no longer capable of this ~~Stupidity~~.

What ſhall I ſay, my God? I would willingly ſay, I Love Thee. 'Tis what I ought to do. I ſee Motives ſufficient to engage and force my Heart to Love; and make me wonder, if I Love thee not: And yet where can my Love be, who ſo little think what thou haſt done for me; and ſo often forſake thee, notwithſtanding all thy Mercies! Self-love, and the Love of the World, 'tis plain abound in me; I wiſh I had ſuch evidence of the Love of thee, my God. But this muſt be thy Gift O Jeſus, both as to the Sincere Deſire and Secure Poſſeſſion of it. This one thing therefore I ask of thee,

thee, and I ask it by that Love which brought thee into this World, That from this Moment I may for ever Love thee. Poſſeſs now my Heart with a true Senſe of thy Goodneſs and Mercy, and may the Thoughts of theſe ſo fill my Soul, that being indifferent to all things of this World, I may labor always to be poſſeſs'd of Jeſus, and not value the Loſs of all things elſe, ſo I gain but thee. Come, Jeſus, enter into my Soul, and live there for ever.

V.

But what Hopes of Loving Jeſus, if thou haſt no regard to thoſe Leſſons, which he teaches thee? He is Lord of Heaven and Earth, and yet Renouncing all the State and Magnificence of the World, ſee in what Humble manner he comes: He has all the Treaſures of the Earth at Command, and ſee what his Poverty is: He has all the Legions of Angels to wait his Pleaſure, and ſee how he is expos'd to Contempt: There's no Place for him in the Town; the beſt Accommodation is taken up by others; a Stable is his Palace, an Ox and an *Aſs* are his Attendants. All this is what he choſe, as moſt agreeable to the Work he has undertaken; and moſt proper for the

giving a true Idea of the things of this World, to such as desire to be his Followers. Not that he requires all to Renounce Riches, and all manner of State; but that he would not have Christians to value themselves by their Possessions or Attendants, or place their Satisfaction or Happiness in them, or love them, or esteem those Contemptible, who have them not. For if one pretends to be a Follower of Christ, and only admires that, which Christ contemn'd, and contemns that, which Christ chose, 'tis plain such an one has only the Name, but not the Spirit of a Christian. Behold then the Model before thee, and be Assur'd, that Christ chose what was best for him and safest for thee; and since thou findest in him Solitude, Poverty, Want of Conveniencies, Hardship, and a Separation from the World; thou canst not question but in these may be all the happiness of a Christian; and tho' they are not sanctified in themselves, are however the ordinary way which leads to all those Interior Virtues, in which resides the Spirit of Christ. And if, upon a serious consideration of what thou here behold'st in him, thou afterwards, casting thy Eye back

back on thy self, seest there not only Inclinations, but Affections and Practices kept up, encourag'd and follow'd quite contrary to what thou art here taught: If thou art ever Solicitous to please thy self, seek what Delights, are bent on thy Ease, loveſt to be admir'd, laboureſt to be great in the World, art impatient at the want of every Convenience, unhappy when contemn'd, &c. Canſt thou be at Peace with thy ſelf, and think thou loveſt thy Lord? Ah, Chriſtian, deceive not thy ſelf, thou canſt not love Chriſt, and have ſuch a Diſlike for what he does; thou canſt not truly love him, and forſake his ways. Pretend not therefore to this Love, except thou canſt ſhew it in thy Life, as well as in thy Words; except thou canſt give Proof of a Mortified and Humble Heart, and art either really Poor, or Poor in Spirit.

O Jeſus! And are theſe the Leſſons thou giv'ſt us from the Manger, and exacteſt the Practice from thy Followers! Whoſe Diſciple then have I hitherto been? I ſee little in my paſt Life, but what has been a Contradiction to this thy Example: Exceſſive Pride and Ambition, a Love of Eaſe and Convenience, a Diſlike to all manner

of Suffering and Retirement, with variety of such other Ingredients, have made up my whole Life: And yet I have call'd my self a Disciple of Christ. How great therefore has my Misery been in this long and affected Blindness, in following my own Perverse Inclinations, and the Corrupt Ways of the World, having little regard to thee, my God, and my Guide! But this my Misery still commends thy Mercy, which has spar'd me till now, and not snatch'd me away in the midst of my Iniquities: And what then have I to do now, but to adore and bless this thy infinit Goodness, and take the Advantage of this Opportunity, thou here giv'st me for my Eternal Good. Pardon me therefore, O loving Redeemer, for all my past Follies, Vanities, and Iniquities, in which I have unworthily departed from thee: I see now the Perverseness of them, and sincerely acknowledging my Fault, I hope thou wilt not deny me Mercy, who comest into the World to shew Mercy to Sinners. Have Mercy on me, O Jesus, have Mercy on me; and having pardon'd my Manifold Transgressions, give me a new Spirit and Docile Heart, whereby I may with due Regard, be

atten-

attentive to all thou here teacheſt me from the Crib, that renouncing my own Corrupt Ways, and all the Miſtaken Judgments of the World, I may take Meaſures from thee only, of what I am to forſake, or diſeſteem, and what to chuſe. Direct me in this, O Jeſus; and ſince I have had ſo much ſad Experience of my Weakneſs, ſtrengthen me, I beſeech thee, by thy Grace, againſt the Attempts of ill Cuſtom, and the World; that being victorious over all my Enemies, I may chuſe rather to follow thee in the Spirit of Humility, Self-denial and Penance, than rejoice with the World in all the deceitful Flatteries, of Pride, Pleaſure, or Self-love. Such Satisfactions as theſe are falſe, and betray the Poſſeſſors to endleſs Miſery, ſince forſaking thee, who art the Life, their Fruit muſt be Death; and rejoicing in thee is the only Subſtantial Comfort; for this is the Life of the Bleſſed.

VI.

If thou art in earneſt, give now Proof of it, for thou haſt the Opportunity before thee. 'Tis at this time the World calls upon thee, to join with it, in many Extravagancies. It pretends to rejoice indeed for the Birth of

of a Redeemer; but the general Method of its Joy is such, as much better would become a Birth-day of *Bacchus*, than of Christ; there being scarce any sort of Excess, which has not the Encouragement of Authority and Custom to give it Credit. And the Cover of all, is, because 'tis the time of Christ's Nativity: The Angels and Shepherds, that is Heaven and Earth, rejoic'd at this great Solemnity; and why not they? 'Tis true, there is great Reason for Christians to rejoice at the Yearly Commemoration of so great a Mercy; but still it ought to be with a Christian Joy, in giving Praise and Adoration to the Author of this Mercy: *Gloria in excelsis Deo.* And if a more than ordinary Relaxation be then allow'd, ought not every thing be done with Moderation, Decency, Innocence and Order? Certainly, when we renew the Memory of the greatest Blessings, it ought to be the Christian's Care, to avoid every thing, that can possibly be displeasing to him, from whose Bounty they flow: It must be a criminal Ingratitude to be then most wicked, when they ought to be most Religious, and can it be tax'd for less than Madness, to celebrate the Mercy of our being

ing Christians, with the Liberties of Heathens? And what is it else, when at this, above all others, we see such a Gate open'd to all manner of Intemperance, in Gluttony, Drinking, Revelling, and Gaming, and variety of Disorders usher'd in, as the natural Consequence of these? Can this be esteem'd a Christian Joy, an Acknowledgment of Blessings, a Thanksgiving for Mercies? What can Atheism or Infidelity desire more for the ridiculing the Fundamental Mysteries of our Religion? And yet thou art invited to take part in this; here then let the Trial be, of what thou hast profess'd; let this determin, which shall command, Christ, or the World, in thy Soul. The World will not be wanting, in Suggesting Motives to prevail; it will pretend to nothing, but what's Moderate and Good, and under this Cover, decoy thee into all Excess. But prepare now against it, beg Grace, whereby to stand thy Ground. Beseech thy Redeemer to be thy Strength, offer thy Heart for his Abode, invite him from the Manger; but see thy Soul be prepar'd for such a Guest. The Ox and Ass offend him not; but if thou hast any Beast, and Brutal Passion with-

in thee, remember the Stable's the much better place.

Be constant then to what thou hast resolv'd; let the Example of S. *Anastasia*, that holy Virgin and Martyr, give thee Courage; who surrendring her Life to Christ, on this Day, when Christ was born for her, made in this the best Return she could for so great a Mercy; and thus has taught thee a Mortifying Lesson on this Day of Joy; but 'twas what she learn'd from him, who came to be a Sacrifice for her. Beg to be well Instructed in this School; offer now thy Life to Christ, at his first entrance into the World: Hasten in amongst the first; and till he shall demand thy Life, be ready to forsake for him, whatever he shall demand of thee; and if it be, what thou canst not renounce, but with great Difficulty and Violence to thy self; look on the Work he has undertaken, and see, whether thou ought'st not to blush at thy once Niceness, and be asham'd of serving a Suffering Lord, no farther than thou canst do it at thy ease: Believe me, Niceness, Self-love and Ease, become not the Follower of such a Master.

St.

St. *Stephen*, *December* 26.

Acts 6. 8, 10, and 7. 54, 60. *Matth.* 23. 34, 39.

1. HE was the first of the Deacons, chosen by the Apostles, and the Scripture says, he was full of Faith, and the Holy Ghost: Pray that all those, who are chosen to any Church-Ministry, may be Men of this Character, and bless'd with these Gifts; the Good of the Church, and of Infinit Souls, depends on this.

2. A Supernal Wisdom, and the Spirit of God, directed him in all his Disputes with the Enemies of his Faith: Pray for the same Heavenly Assistance, both for thy self and all others, as often as Charity to thy Neighbor, and Duty to Truth, shall oblige to the like Engagements; and remember, that Patience and Moderation best become the Advocates of Truth.

3. He supported the Malice of his Adversaries with a wonderful Courage: Pray, that this may be a Pattern to thee and all others, when call'd to any part of these Trials.

4. He

4. He pray'd for his Enemies, that Ston'd him: Pray, and endeavour, that the like Charity may ever accompany thee and all others under the severeſt Provocations; be conſtant in Practizing it in ordinary ones; 'tis the ſureſt way of not failing in greater.

St. *Stephen* having been choſen by the Apoſtles one of the Firſt Deacons, his Diligence and Fidelity in his Charge was edifying to the Faithful, his Power, in working great Wonders and Miracles rendred him eminent to all People, ſo that he became the Inſtrument of great Converſions; the Number of Diſciples multiplying very conſiderably in *Jeruſalem*, and a great Number of the Prieſts becoming obedient to the Faith: This Zeal of his, thus happy in ſo plentiful a Harveſt of Souls, gave Diſturbance to the Enemies of his Faith, and exciting their Envy, put them upon unwarrantable Reſolutions, of obliging him to Silence by their falſe Reaſoning; and if this ſhould prove ineffectual, of accompliſhing their Deſigns, by falſe Accuſations and Malice. Here's a Comfortable Example of a Diſciple's Zeal, and as terrible one of Blind and Obſtinate Paſſion.

Whoever

Whoever undertakes to be Christ's Disciple, ~~whether in the quality of Priest, Deacon or Laic,~~ must expect Opposition: Happy they, who by their Zealous Labours, or Edifying Regularity in themselves and Families, give occasion to Adversaries to be Jealous of them, and put them upon Malicious Contrivances of less'ning their Fame to the World, for preventing the Fruit of their good Example. Such as these are the Sweet ~~Favor~~ of Christ; their Piety, Labours, and Justice, ascend like Incense before him; they are Blessed in what they do, and ~~more~~ Blessed ~~still~~ in what they suffer, being in both parts the true Followers of their Master, whose Character is compriz'd in these few Words, of doing Good to all, and Suffering Evil from all. But as for others, who, having undertaken the same Charge, are either so remiss in all Duties, or so unedifying and disorderly in the Method of their Lives, as to give but too frequent opportunity to Adversaries of exposing them and their Church under very Disadvantageous Characters, without putting them to the necessity of framing untruths; such as these are very unhappy as to themselves, ~~in departing from the~~

odour

Life

~~Life of Christ, and Renouncing, in Fact, whatever~~ Religion they Profess, and ~~are very unnatural~~ Members of ~~their Church, who by their Irregularities and Wickedness, become like Vipers, gnawing out the very Bowels of their Mother, and more~~ Cruel ~~still~~ to their own Brethren, in conveying Poyson to their Souls for the satisfying their own Criminal Passions. These are they, who abuse whatever Light they have, and not following the Dictates of their Religion design'd for their Salvation, will find no other effects of this Contemn'd Mercy, than in their greater Condemnation.

For whatever the Church of Christ suffers from the Inventions and Malicious Calumnies of Unbelieving Adversaries, all this I look upon as the Inheritance Christ has left it, the Blessing of suffering Innocence, such as has not only its Recompence in the Life to come, but a Plentiful Fruit here too; for as *Paul*'s Conversion was the effect of the Subornation and Injustice us'd against S *Stephen*; so I question not, but the discovery of all such unjustifiable Practices against Christ's Church, serves as a Light, which directs great Numbers into it, and is at the

the same time a Proof of its being Christ's. But when I hear of weighty and infamous Accusations advanc'd against the Church, and the Occasion given by the real Crimes of its Members or Governors by their Ambition, Pride, Covetousness, Luxury, &c. (tho' there be a Notorious Injustice in Charging her with the Crimes of her Members, yet) I cannot but Pity and Reproach all those, who are thus unhappy in putting Stones into the Hands of her Enemies to fling at her; it being they themselves, more than her Enemies, that Stone her; and the more eminent degree they hold in the Church, the more it is they are Instrumental in this unnatural Cruelty: The Violence and Fury of those Blind *Jews*, who, this Day lifted up their Hands against S. *Stephen* is but a weak Resemblance of their Crime; and I wish on this Festival, while they pretend to Honor this Martyr, they might have Grace to see, what part they take with his Executioners, and more Grace to amend.

S. *Stephen*, being brought by false Accusations before the Tribunal, with great Courage and Liberty of Spirit, gave an account of his Faith; but

but the evidence of Miracles or Reason could not satisfie them, who thirsted not for Truth, but for his Blood: And therefore seeing themselves hitherto disappointed, they hurry him with Violence out of *Jerusalem*, and there discharge their Malice against him, in Stoning him to Death. And here it was, while under this Execution, he had the Comfort of seeing Heaven open before him, and Jesus standing at the Right Hand of his Father; and he at the same time gave Proof of being his Disciple, in Praying for those that Ston'd him; they had Malice in their Hearts, and he perfect Charity in his; they threw Stones and Death at him, he sent up Prayers to Heaven for them; he kneel'd down and cried with a loud Voice, *Lord, lay not this Sin to their Charge*, and so expir'd.

This was the wonderful Charity of this First Martyr: 'Tis this the Church Prays for in the Collect of this Festival, and ought to be the subject of every one's Prayer in particular. There are very great difficulties in the practice of this Gospel-Charity, and in some, thro' their Natural Constitution, they are much greater than in others; and yet it being indispensible in all, there

here can be no Juſt Excuſe to thoſe, who have it not; whatever the difficulties be, they muſt be overcome: To Die without it, is to Die unprepar'd; the fulneſs of Faith and of all other good Works will profit nothing, if this Charity be wanting; and it being ſo very difficult a Leſſon, how can thoſe, with any reaſonable Grounds, Hope to Practice it at their Deaths, who Neglect the Practiſe of it all their Lives? Long Habits, without a Miraculous Grace, cannot be overcome at once: And tho' the ſeemingly ſincere endeavors of a Death-bed Repentance may give ſome Comfort to ſurviving Friends; yet there is ſtill too much Reaſon to fear, thoſe Paſſions, to which the Soul has been a long time accuſtom'd, are not then ſo effectually Renounced, as they ought to be, for the ſecurity of that laſt Hour: And therefore, I look on all thoſe, who are eaſie in admitting Reſentments of Injuries, Diſlikes and Averſions; who permit them to Strengthen and take Root; omit, on this Score, all uſual Correſpondence and Civilities; catch at all opportunities of leſs'ning and expoſing the Parties concern'd, ſeek to return Evil for Evil, rejoice in their Misfortunes,

Misfortunes, and will not move a Finger, or ſend up one Prayer for their Comfort and Relief, *&c.* All theſe, I ſay, I look on as Evil Chriſtians, who Live without Charity, and are in evident danger of Dying ſo. Theſe have not learnt St. *Stephen*'s Leſſon, in receiving the Stones thrown at them, with his Patience and Charity, but ſtill endeavor to throw them back again with the Paſſion of that Hand, with which they were caſt at them: And truly, conſidering the great number of Chriſtians, that thus, in rendring Evil for Evil, are throwing Stones at one another, 'tis to be feared, ſo many looſe the Patronage of Jeſus, who thus unduly undertake to Vindicate themſelves; and that in refuſing to leave their Cauſe to him, they'll never have the Priviledge of ſeeing him at the Right Hand of his Father; except by a timely Repentance, they Renounce this Method, and endeavor to Live here by the ſame Spirit, by which they Hope to Live for ever; and what is this, but the Spirit of Charity; that Spirit, which he ſo earneſtly Recommended to his Diſciples before his going out of this World, and was to bring them after him, to the Poſſeſſion

of

of a better Life, in which it was to be consummated, by a Perfect Union of their Souls with God for all Eternity? Bow down, my Soul, before thy God this Day; acknowledge all thy past Transgressions in the Breach of Charity, and leave not thy Prayers, till thou hast obtain'd a New Spirit, by which thou may'st ever Live in Peace with all, forgiving all Injuries, as thou desir'st thy self to be forgiven: Beg this Spirit of Jesus, and desire this Martyr to join with thee, for the obtaining what thou askest on this Day, wherein he shew'd so great an Example of it.

St. *John*, *December* 27.

Eccles. 15. 1, 6. *Jo.* 21. 19, 24.

1. HE was an Apostle of Jesus Christ, and One of the Four Evangelists: Pray for all Bishops of Christ's Church, who are the Successors of the Apostles: Pray for all who undertake to Preach the Gospel; Pray for all that Read it, that they may be directed by the same Spirit, by which it was Writ; and remember, to Beg the Assistance

ſiſtance of this Spirit, as often as thou takeſt that Sacred Volume into thy Hands to read: Pray that this may be the Rule of thy Life.

2. He was the Beloved Diſciple of Chriſt: Pray, that thou may'ſt have a ſhare in the Love of Jeſus: And ſee, there be nothing in thy Heart, which may render thee unworthy of his Love.

3. His Epiſtles Breathe nothing but Charity or the Love of our Brethren; every Page is full of this: Pray for the obtaining this Vertue, and endeavor this to Practice it.

4. He ſuffered for the ſake of Chriſt; was caſt into a Veſſel of Boyling Oyl, as is related by *Tertullian*, and being miraculouſly preſerv'd, came forth without Hurt: He was afterwards ſent into Baniſhment, and there had the Priviledge of thoſe Prophetick Viſions, ſet down in the Revelations: Pray for all that ſuffer under whatever Affliction, that they may be ſupported with Healy Comforts.

It was the happy Priviledge of St. *John*, to be the Beloved Apoſtle of Chriſt, who being Truth and Juſtice it ſelf, could not miſplace any Affection, and therefore lov'd nothing in him, but what juſtly deſerv'd his Love. How happy

happy would all those Christians be, who, Honoring this Festival, would sincere'y endeavor to put their Souls in the disposition of this Apostle, so as to Hope for a part in the love of their Redeemer! This cannot be in the least expected from him that is the Eternal Truth, except there be such Qualifications in the Soul, which render it sincerely Good. Shews of Devotion, and an Exterior Piety, are sufficient to gain the Opinion of Men, and make such Persons be reputed the Beloved of Christ; but how little to the purpose are all these in Regard of Him, who is the Searcher of Hearts, if they proceed not from a Faithful Heart, such as is Pure in his Sight? This was the Disposition of this Apostle, who being call'd to this Dignity in his Youthful Years, at an Age most of all expos'd to the Vanities and Flatteries of this World, and most Averse to Suffering, stood out however resolutely against all kind of Charms and Terrors, continued Faithful to his Master under all Trials, with the Constancy of more experienc'd Years; and thus giving Proof of a Heart open to nothing but the love of Christ, was therefore above all beloved by him. Such ought to be the Hearts of those,

who expect this Day to partake, with this Apoſtle, in the love of their Divine Maſter: They have a perfect Emblem of the State, in which their Souls ought to be, in that Favor ſhew'd to S. *John* at the Laſt Supper, when he reſted on the Breaſt of Chriſt; they who can bring their Hearts like him to reſt on Jeſus, may juſtly Hope for the love of Jeſus: They, who, amidſt the many Diſtractions of this World, can make Jeſus the Centre of their Comfort, can have no Reaſon to doubt of Inheriting, with him, this Bleſſing. This happy Diſpoſition cannot be expected, till they have overcome the World, and obtain'd that Conſtancy of Mind, as not to be prevail'd on, either by its pleaſing Solicitations, or its moſt terrifying Objects, to be diverted from this Reſting-place, which Chriſt offers to every devout Soul. Here is the Task every one has upon their Hands, this the Condition, for the obtaining this Chriſtian Poſt, and is ſuch as cannot be complied with, but with great difficulties: For tho' we have permitted us, in this Life, the Uſe of all Creatures, and, in all Conditions, there are not wanting Variety of pleaſing Objects, whether as to Poſſeſſions, Children,

dren, Company, &c. or as to what belongs to Eating, Drinking, Clothing, Diversion, Entertainments, &c. which, thro' their Natural agreeableness, are ever Courting the Senses and the Mind; tho' all these are allow'd in their due degree, and the being pleas'd with them cannot be separated from that Use, which is permitted; yet to love them is dangerous, and puts the Soul in hazard of resting on them instead of Christ; which hazard is ever greater in proportion to that degree, to which this love arises: A Nice Point; to Use and Enjoy Creatures and the Goods of this Life, and yet not to love them; at least, not to love so, as to Prejudice that Love and Rest, which we ought to have in Christ: And yet thus it ought to be, because we are not to Transgress the Eternal Decrees of God, who having given all Creatures for our Use and Convenience, allows us not to give our Hearts to them, but has reserv'd these for himself.

There is no less difficulty on the other side, as to things that displease us: For tho' we are here in this Life expos'd to Variety of Necessities, tho' we see our selves Destitute of all Human Comfort; tho' we suffer Loss of Goods

and Friends tho' we see the World Arm'd against us; tho' there be a Succession of Evils attending our whole Lives; yet is not allow'd us, under the Oppression of the most weighty Afflictions, to lose our Comfort and Rest in Christ; but in his Breast we are ever to repose. These are the Conditions for obtaining the love of Jesus, hard enough to our Corrupt Nature, and yet not to be dispens'd with. And now, while all pretend to this Love, how few are Solicitous to put themselves in the Dispositions of being capable of it? Only those, who keep that Guard upon their Hearts, as not to admit of any such Excess, in regard of things, that either please or displease them; as to let Love or Fear, Content or Trouble, take them from the Breast of their Redeemer for they are only these, who can be esteem'd so to Live in this World, as not to be Slaves to it; so to Converse with Creatures, as not to let them take Place of God. And now, if the Breasts of all were to be this Day laid open, is it not to be fear'd, there would be very few, whose Hearts would be found thus resting in Jesus? Have we not Reason to apprehend, in the greatest Numbers, there would

be

be discover'd such Excess of Passion, that either thro the Fondness of what they Love, or the Disturbance of what gives them Trouble, they are so wholly taken up with Creatures, that they are at a great distance remov'd from God? Here's our Common Weakness; we are plac'd in this World, for the gaining a better; we have other use of all Creatures allow'd us, as far as they may be a Help to us on our Way, and we generally let the Concern of these, in one Respect or other, so Seize our Hearts, that either the Enjoyment or Want of them leaves but little place for the Love of our Eternal Good; so that what by the Divine Appointment is design'd for our Help, or our Exercise, by an Excess of Passion, we wholly pervert into the Occasions of Sin, and make them serve as the Instruments of our Exclusion from the Sight of God. 'Tis the Remedy of this abuse we are to Pray for this Day, that no Concern for what is Created, may take place of our Creator: God is to be the Principal Object of our Love, other things are only to be lov'd for him, or in him; and whenever any affection, tho' of things most Innocent and Lawful, arises to that degree, as

to take off our Concern from God and his Commandments, so that in them we begin to place our Happiness and Rest, there's no Question, but all such Love is Injurious to our greater Interest, and such cannot truly say, They rest in Christ. God likewise is to be the Principal Object of our Fear; and whenever for the *Want* or *Loss* of any thing Created, we indulge our Trouble so far, as to remove all Fear of Losing God, all such Trouble is certainly Immoderate and Sinful, and cannot be permitted, but by forsaking the Resting-place of this Apostle. How very jealous then ought Christians to be of these growing Passions, carefully avoiding whatever they Experience to Enflame or Feed them? Playing with these, is jesting with Eternity; to give Way to them, upon a Confidence of keeping them within Bounds, is to let loose the Lions and Bears, and Effect of a Blind Presumption; and therefore to Pray for the Love of Jesus, and not to labor in cutting off the Occasions of these Passions, is to run from Jesus, and pray they may come to him. This absurdity becomes not those, who are serious in their Profession; and considering the great

great Insincerity of our Temper, and the many Subtilties of our false Reasoning, by which we are too apt to Favor our Inclinations, requires a very Nice Examin for its Remedy or Prevention. 'Tis something Surprizing to consider into how many Dangerous Snares, Pious and Well-meaning Souls unadvisedly fall, for want of this Care; whilst by giving way to the Innocent Part (as they reckon it) of these Passions, they are insensibly engag'd in such Familiarities and Affections, or in such Excess of Trouble, Dislike or Aversion, that if their Hearts were laid open, 'tis to be fear'd, there would be found very little of those Holy Dispositions, they seem to Honor in this Apostle.

This we confess to be our Weakness, O Blessed Redeemer, and we implore thy Powerful Grace for the preventing its Mischiefs: Teach us therefore so to regulate all our Affections, that neither the Love of what we here possess, or the Trouble for what we want, may ever arise to any such Excess, as to separate us from thee. Teach us to be Vigilant and Wise in this Point; and tho' we have the Flatteries of Creatures to invite us, or the Prospect

of Racks to terrifie us, yet ſo mercifully ſupport us by thy Grace, that neither the Love or Fear of any thing Created may ever force us from thy Breaſt, by deſtroying that Love we are bound to have for Thee.

Holy Innocents, December 28.

Apoc. 14. 1, 5. *Mat.* 2. 13, 18.

Read Gospel or Ep.

1. THeſe were the firſt Victims of Jeſus Chriſt: Offer thy ſelf a Sacrifice to him, who was Born to become a Sacrifice for thee. If thy Life be not in Danger from the Cruelty of Enemies; be thou thy own Spiritual Executioner, in dying to all that is contrary to the Law of God; thus wilt thou become the Victim of Chriſt; and this thou art to pray for this Day.

2. In theſe thou ſeeſt the Fury of their Enemies, to be the means of making them eternally happy: Pray, thou may'ſt make this good Uſe of whatever thou ſuffer'ſt. And remember, Suffering join'd with Innocence, to be the way of the Goſpel, and of Chriſt, and ſuch as leads to Glory.

3. Theſe

3. These were cut off in the State of Innocence: A Day proper for all Parents to pray for their Children, that God would preserve them in their Innocence, and rather take them out of this World in that State of Security, than permit them to grow up, if he foresees, they will take to evil Ways, and be Rebels against him.

In these first Victims of Christ, who were murther'd by *Herod*, the Church honours Persecuted and Oppress'd Innocence, gives Thanks for their Glory, and teaches all the Faithful, that whatever Malice God permits the Wicked to exercise against the Just, is for the Good of those, that suffer it: So that to wonder at the Sufferings of the Innocent, is the effect of too weak Reasoning, such as comprehends not the Conduct of God: when, very often, there is no other Reason, why he permits them to suffer, but because they are Innocent. This Consideration ought to moderate in Christians all Excess of Grief and Disquiet, when they are under any kind of Affliction; for as the Malice of Persecutors has been the Advantage of the Martyrs; and had they suffer'd less, they had been less Glorious; so every Occasion

of Trouble, if ſubmitted to with Patience, may be as the Seed of Glory; not the Scourge of Anger, but the Mercy of a Loving Father, deſigning by ſuch Steps to exerciſe and perfect his Children, for the obtaining an Eternal Reſt. This is a Leſſon theſe ſuffering Innocents give to all Chriſtians, and an Encouragement, to wait with Patience, under all the Appointments of God, in Hopes of the Recompence he has promiſed.

But theſe murther'd Innocents give a more particular Inſtruction to all Parents; that while they deteſt this Barbarous Fact in *Herod*, they would be careful to ſecure their Children againſt his Cruelty, which they are too often expos'd to; not from *Herod's* Hand, but by their proving *Herods* to their own Children, and letting them fall a Sacrifice, not to their Cruelty, but to their moſt unnatural Careleſneſs and Neglect. This happens more ways than one; the firſt and moſt ordinary is that of laying them in the ſame Bed with them, or with their Nurſes; where every Night, for many Months, they are in danger of being murther'd, by being over-laid. This Danger is ſo great, that, whatever Tenderneſs or

Love

Love the Parents have, it can be no Security against it, where every little Accident is sufficient to stifle and rob them of their Breath, as effectually, as the ripping up their Bowels with the Executioner's Hand. And tho' the great numbers of those, who are thus expos'd, and yet happily escape all such Accidents, gives a certain Confidence to some to venture it, and is sufficient to perswade others, there's no such Hazard to be apprehended; yet whoever examines the Bills of Mortality, and sees, there's scarce a Week, in which there are not some Infants thus unhappily murther'd in the Town of *London*, and no Year, in which the number arises not to several Hundreds, may in this find a Demonstration of the Danger, sufficient to terrifie all those Parents, who have any Bowels or Sense to understand, that tho' the far greater number escapes, yet the constant Perishing of so many Yearly, is enough for this thing to be justly esteemed Dangerous. Thus 'tis reputed by the Church of God, who no sooner becomes the Mother of Children, by bringing them forth to Christ in Baptism, but She expresses her just Care and Tenderness of them, by her seasonable providing against this Mischief; requiring of her Priests, after the Administration

miniſtration of this Sacrament, to give this Charge to the Parents; that they permit not the Infant to be laid in Bed with them, or with the Nurſe, becauſe of the Danger of its being over-laid. 'Tis plain then She apprehends it Dangerous, and therefore thoſe Parents, who having no regard to this Caution, do otherwiſe than She directs, are in this Undutiful to their Common Mother, raſhly expoſe their Children to Danger; and if the Miſchief happens, of which they have been thus ſolemnly forewarn'd, who can excuſe them from the Guilt of *Herod*'s Cruelty, in becoming the Murtherers of their own Children; for as many as thus Periſh by this unnatural Neglect, ſo many Parricides there are?

A Second Way is that of Mothers putting their Children out to Suck at a Stranger's Breaſt, which as often as it is done without Neceſſity, is Unnatural, and therefore ſeverely reprov'd by the Fathers and all Antiquity: It is likewiſe an evident expoſing of their Lives, by leaving them in ſuch Hands, who are generally wanting in that Love and Care, which is neceſſary for their preſervation. They, who know, how great this Care ought to be, cannot

not reasonably expect it from Strangers, who having generally no other Motive, for what they do, than the Pay of so much a Week, cannot be suppos'd, upon this consideration, to Act with all that Fidelity and Watchfulness, which those Tender Twigs require, and which can only be the effect of that great love, with which Nature inspires Mothers in regard of their Children: For if Mothers, notwithstanding this Excessive Love, are not willing to undertake this Troublesom Charge, how are they like to perform it, who have not this Love, and undertake it only for Money? Therefore we find *Sarah*, *Ann*, the Mother of the *Machabees*, *Mary*, and other Holy Women, bringing up their Children at their own Breasts; and the Scripture scarce affords one Instance of a Mother putting out her Child to a Stranger. Hence S. *Ambrose* explicating those Words of *Genesis*, c. 21. *Who will tell* Abraham, *that* Sarah *gives her Child suck?* Says; 'Tis a place of Instruction; and Wo-
'men are here call'd upon to remember
'their Dignity, and give Suck to their
'Children. For this is the Grace of
'Mothers, this is their Honor, by
'which they may make their Children

'Dear

'Dear to their Husbands. Hence S. *Gregory* answering to the questions propos'd to him from *England* by S. *Augustine* Bishop of *Canterbury*, says; 'Tis 'an ill Custom crept in amongst Married Persons, that Mothers refuse to 'give their own Children Suck, and 'put them out to be Nurs'd by other 'Women: Which seems to proceed 'from no other Cause, but that of 'Incontinency; they will not Bridle 'their Carnal Passion, and therefore 'refuse to be Nurses to their own Children. Now how can Parents satisfie their Charge, who on such Considerations, turn their Poor Infants out of Doors, to all those Inconveniencies and Hazards they must meet with from the Unskilfulness, Ill-nature, Cruelty, or Carelessness of a Stranger's Hand? And tho' we cannot give here a Demonstration, as above, how extensive this Mischief is, yet making a Judgment of all, from the Proportion of what we know, there's Reason enough to fear, that the Number of Children, who Perish thro' the Fault of Nurses, Is not Inferior to that of any other Disease, which has Place in the Bills of Mortality: And then, if we add all those, who escaping Death, are by the

the same Neglect, Disabled, Lam'd, Blinded, and unhappily brought into Infirmities and Diseases, which last all their Lives, there will be Demonstration enough to Conclude, that this Method of exposing Children is very dangerous, and such as cannot well be exempted from partaking in the Guilt of *Herod*'s Cruelty.

A Third Way, tho' not so General, is occasion'd by the Excessive Fondness of Parents, who ever complying with their Childrens Inclinations, lose by degrees their Authority over them, and by the same Steps, make them insensible of any Duty they have to be commanded. Thus it comes in a short time, they are to be denied nothing; and Parents have it not in their Power to deny them, for fear of giving them Disquiet, or alienating their Minds from them. Now who can tell me, into how many Distempers Children are brought by this yielding Method, when desiring many things, that are hurtful, both as to Eating, Drinking, Playing, *&c.* they must not be denied? Hence what Surfeits, what Heats, what Colds, and how many Murthering Diseases, which are but the Consequences of these disorders? And to whom

whom must all these be laid? The Mischief is still as great in the Method of their Cures. For when Physic comes to be necessary, they have a dislike to it, they are unwilling to take it; and who shall now prevail on them, who know not what it is to be Contradicted or Commanded? The Administration therefore of it must either be wholly Omitted, in compliance with them, or else it must be given by Force, which puts them into that disturbance, as to inflame the Distemper, or render the Remedy ineffectual: And tis not to be imagin'd, as I have been inform'd by those, who have seen the sad Experience, how many Perish thro' this Ill Management, who otherwise in all probability, might have had Relief. Thus Parents Fondness proves *Herod*'s Cruelty, in bringing Distempers and Death to the Children of their own Bowels.

The last Way I shall here take Notice of, proceeds from the same Root, but is still more Cruel, and that is of those Parents, whose Children, notwithstanding all their indiscreet Conduct, escape with Life, but are Educated in such an unchristian Way, that by the Parents Fault they are evident-

ly

ly expos'd to the danger of Dying Everlastingly. To this danger many are brought, by being depriv'd of due Education and Instruction: Their Parents cannot think of parting with them at those Years, when their Souls are best capable of receiving good Impressions and Principles of Piety, Discipline and good Order; hence losing the Opportunity they grow up in Ignorance, Obstinacy and Self-conceit; and Little Master in a few Years becomes an Imperious Blockhead: And who then shall undertake to be his Master, when having never been accustom'd to Direction, he now sees so little of himself, as to know of none he wants; or if he knows it, has not now Patience or Humility enough, to bear it? Thus qualified, he Steps out a Man into the World, fitted thro' his wretched Education, for all its Follies and Vices, but wholly unprovided of those necessary Dispositions, for the making any kind of tolerable defence against them. 'Tis thus Fond Parents send their Children naked and disarm'd into the Heat of Battel; here they fall; and who must answer it? 'Tis the Parents are *Herods*, and by their Hands they fall.

And

And from this Guilt none of those Parents can be exempt, who observing any Violence of Passion, or Ill Custom in their Children, such as their Age is capable of, take no Care to Correct it: Neither can they be excus'd, who are so immoderately indulgent, as to favor them in all their Humors and Desires, who will see no Fault in them themselves, and shew their displeasure at all those, who would willingly do this friendly part to them. For all this kind of Fondness is a mistaken Love, and nothing less than Cruelty; being the direct Way to bring their Children, by degrees, into all those Misfortunes of Pride, Obstinacy, Passion, Self-love, *&c.* which afterwards when grown up and strengthen'd, must cost them Infinit Labour to overcome; and if not overcome, will prove their Ruin, by leading them into all Vice; for these are the Natural Steps to it. Those Parents therefore, who are thus indiscreetly Tender of their Children, are almost in as great danger of being *Herods* to them, as those, who are in the other Extreme, and wholly Neglect them; the same Mischiefs being the Natural consequence of both Extreams: Wherefore I must needs own as their Obli-

Obligation is great, so the Task is very Difficult, which Parents have upon their Hands; such as requires the Particular Assistance of God, for their direction and help, and which I Hope they will beg this Day, and make it the subject of their daily Prayers; and 'twill be a very Seasonable Charity in all others, to join with them, for the more effectual obtaining that Grace, so absolutely necessary for them, that as many as they bring into this World, they may likewise bring forth to Salvation.

St. *Thomas* of *Canterbury*, *Dec.* 29.

H.b. 5. 1, 6. *Jo.* 10. 11, 16.

1. HE was Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*: Pray for all the Bishops of Christ's Church, that they may have a true Zeal and Piety answerable to their Charge.

2. He was forc'd into Banishment, where he Liv'd a great Example of all Virtue; neither could the Suffering of his Relations, or any Considerations of Flesh and Blood, move him to yield,

in

in the least Point of what he look'd upon his Duty for their Relief: Pray, thou may'st make the like good use of all kind of Suffering: Pray for Constancy in all thy Duties, and that no Human respects, may ever prevail on thee to do injury to thy Conscience.

3. As a Good Shepherd he gave his Life for his Sheep, being Barbarously Murther'd in his own Cathedral at Vespers. Pray, that all Prelates and Pastors may largely partake of this Apostolic Spirit, in giving their Study and Care, their Labors and whole Life, for their Flock; that living in a perpetual Renunciation of Private Interest, Satisfaction and Ease, for their good, they may be thus prepar'd for the same to Surrender their Lives.

The Principal Occasion of this Prelat's Sufferings, was the Opposition made against his Prince, by refusing to subscribe to such Laws, which he judg'd Injurious to the Church, and such as he knew not how to approve, without betraying that Trust repos'd in him, as Supreme Pastor of it in this Nation. This drew upon him the Anger of his King, and foreseeing the Mischiefs, that were like to ensue, he chose a Voluntary Banishment, and retir'd; esteeming

esteeming it more becoming his Character, to expose himself to all the Inconveniences, and Hazards of such a Retirement, and his King's Displeasure, than comply with what he thought Unjust. His Constancy, Resolution and Courage are to be admir'd, and leave an Instruction, not only to Pastors, but to all others of whatever degree, to enter into the Serious Consideration of whatever Charge they undertake; and being convinc'd of the absolute Obligations belonging to it, to be Faithful in the discharge of them, without ever letting either the apprehension of others displeasure, or the consideration of their own Interest or Ease, prevail on them to be False to their Trust. This is the Duty of Justice, and whatever a Christian suffers on this Score, is suffering for Justice sake, such as the Gospel enjoins and encourages with the Promise of an Everlasting Reward. 'Tis here then every Christian has the Opportunity, without the Cruelty of a Tyrant or Persecutor, of Living and Dying Martyrs; and 'tis the want of this Courage and Fidelity, which cuts them off from all Hopes of a Crown. And tho' such as are in the highest Posts, have

have the more difficult Trials; yet Trials are not wanting in every degree, which still bearing a proportion to their State, must be esteem'd difficult too. For there is no Condition of Human Life, which has not certain Rules and Limits for its Direction, such as Duty and Justice prescribe, and which entitle the Observers to the Character of Just. Soveraign Princes have these Rules in regard to the welfare of their People; Popes, Bishops, Priests, and Religious, have these Rules respectively to their Charge; so have all Magistrates, all in Office; so have Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Masters and Servants, Buyers and Sellers; in fine, there's no State of Life, but what is Subject to them. Now tho' these Rules and Limits admit, according to different Circumstances, of a great Latitude; yet Common Sense and Experience are generally a sufficient Light to every one's Conscience, that there are frequent Temptations of offending against these Rules, sometimes by not coming up to them, and other times by transgressing or going beyond them.

In this all the Corruptions of our Nature and the World act their part; Interest,

Intereſt, Ambition, Pleaſure, Self-love, & Fear, Hatred, Anger, and all the Paſſions, are Motives to this Injuſtice. Theſe are ever induſtrious to prevail on Human Weakneſs to have more Regard to them, than to the Rules preſcrib'd. Theſe Aſſault the Throne and the Chair; theſe Thruſt themſelves into Religious Houſes, Families and Shops; and no Condition, Sex, Age or Perſon in this Mortal State, is exempt from their Attempts. Here's now the Trial of all Chriſtians, as laſting as their Lives; here's the Opportunity of Suffering for Juſtice; here's the Dependance they have on God for his Grace, whereby they are to be enabled to Suffer on this account. They, who, like this Martyr, have only Regard to their Duty, and ſhutting their Eyes and Hearts againſt all the Powerful Perſwaſives of Intereſt, Self-love and Convenience, run the Hazard of all Inconveniencies rather than deviate from the Obligations of their State; they who venture all the Conſequences of a Faithful diſcharging their Duty to Juſtice and Truth, neither over-aw'd by thoſe above, nor yielding to Equals, nor Biaſs'd by any Self-reſpect; they who do thus, are Followers of the

the Gospel, and ~~True Honorers of this Festival~~; and it cannot be doubted, that whatever they Suffer in this Way of Justice, whether it be the Loss of Friends, the Displeasure of those in Authority, the Anger of Parents, the disobliging Company, the Want of Conveniencies, the Danger of Poverty, ~~and leaving Children unprovided~~, or whatever else it may be, it cannot be doubted, I say, but all this is much the better Portion, than those wretched Advantages others make, by their yielding Method in Transgressing the the Rules of Justice, and will be as certain Steps to an Eternal Crown, as if it were all suffer'd from the Hand of a Persecutor for the Profession of their Faith: These Practical Duties being as much the Injunction of the Gospel, as the Belief of those Articles, which it delivers.

But now, while we are oblig'd to an Exact Observation of those Rules, which Justice absolutely requires, that so we may be truly Faithful and Just, there is however a great Condescendence belonging to the Christian Temper, which obliges us many times to yield, and there may be as great Virtue sometimes in complying, as, at

others,

others, there is in being immoveable. This will easily be understood by all those, who observe the great Disturbances occasion'd amongst Christians, when Passion or Jealousie making a Breach, they begin to dispute about the Niceties of Rights, Privileges and Power, and each Party being Obstinate in their Claim, they refuse all manner of Reconciliation but upon the decision of such Points, which are not to be determin'd. This happens not only amongst those, who are in public Employs, but likewise to Men of all Degrees, from the Throne to the Galley; there being no State whatever, but what lays Claim to certain Rights and Privileges belonging to it, and tho' these are agreed on, by common Consent, in many Cases, yet there are many others too, which cannot be so easily determin'd: And therefore, when the Dispute comes to be about the utmost Extent of each Power and Privilege, 'tis to be fear'd, there's generally a great Weakness of Pride or Passion, which begins, and carries on the Controversie: And tho' a peaceable giving way to any such suppos'd Invasion of Right, is always pretended injurious in its Consequences; yet there's reason

enough to apprehend, this Plea is too often taken up, only to cover that Pride, which is ever unwilling to comply; and that there are far greater Miſchiefs to be fear'd from an obſtinate Oppoſition, in the Breach of Charity, and Irremediable Confuſions, than what could follow from peaceable Condeſcendence.

I ſay not this with any deſign of making the leaſt Reflection on the proceedings of this Martyr; but for a Caution to others, not to deceive themſelves, in cloking their Obſtinacy with his Example, and making at any time an ill uſe of what he did. 'Tis eaſie being overſeen in theſe nice Points; and therefore leaving thoſe, who bear any public Character, to the Advice of Council, and diſcreet Friends, I make my preſent Application to all others, beſeeching them, in ſuch Controverſies, to be ever jealous of themſelves, to be fearful of putting themſelves under the Conduct of their own Paſſions, or of ſuch Adviſers, who judge by Inclination, and are more ready, by their Flatteries, to promote Miſchiefs, than by Prudence and Courage, to prevent them. There never want fair Pretexts to carry on very unreaſonable Contentions, eſpecially where the Cauſe pretended,

pretended, is for Justice. But the Cause of Justice is as much to be suspected, as that of Religion; the Violation of the whole Law and Gospel are most impiously Sanctified under these Usurp'd Titles; and as all public Calamities, and the most irreligious Designs, are advanc'd under the Color of Religion; so the most Unjust Undertakings carry Justice in their Front. These are too frequent Delusions, to excuse Christians in what they undertake; and while all Parties, in their most Uncharitable Differences pretend to the same, 'tis very plain this Pretext is not sufficient to justifie. Whatever Motives therefore may appear for the engaging in any sort of Contention, or breaking off all friendly Correspondence with our Neighbors, tho' under the color of Reason and Justice, they ought for some time to be suspected, and never to be allow'd of, but after a Christian Deliberation, and the discreet Advice of others; in which it ought to be consider'd, whether a Passing by, Overlooking, or a Friendly Compliance in such Provocations, as are given, be not more conformable to Charity and Prudence, and expos'd to less Mis-

chiefs, than thoſe uſual Methods of the World, in venturing all the Conſequences of Contention, and never yie'ding but on force. I am ſure if this were more conſider'd than it is, there wou'd be much fewer Diſſenſions amongſt Chriſtians, than at preſent there are; that Uncharitableneſs, which now breaks out upon the leaſt Provocations, wou'd be in a great part prevented, and it wou'd not be every litt'e Jealouſie or Suſpicion, every Diſpute about Punctilio's and Niceties of Power, Right, Privilege or Place, that could furniſh Matter for thoſe Differences, which are now kept up with ſo much heat amongſt many private Perſons and Families. A Goſpel Condeſcendence would either prevent or heal all ſuch Breaches, and Charity would be maintain'd, without which there can be no Hopes of entring into the Kingdom of everlaſting Peace.

St.

St. *Sabinus*, Martyr, *Decem.* 30.

THE Bishop of *Spoletum*, who, in the Persecution of *Maximianus*, was seiz'd by *Venustianus*, President of the City, and for breaking an Image of *Jupiter*, which he was commanded to adore, had his Hands immediately cut off, and then cast into Prison, where he was supported by the Charity of a Pious Widow. *Venustianus* being afterwards miraculously heal'd of a violent Distemper in his Eyes by the said Bishop, became Christian; and being Baptized with his Wife and Children, they were soon after put to Death by the Emperor's Order, and *Sabinus* beaten with Staves, till he expir'd. Thus art thou encourag'd to suffer in the Service of thy God: If thou hast not the Persecutor to threaten thee with the Sword, thou hast an Enemy, at least, who offers thee Idols to adore. He offers many; and while thou expressest thy Abhorrence against some, is there not any one, to which thou art more favourable? To adore one is enough to be an Idolater. What if it be Company, Drink or Money? What if a Sensual Friend, the courted World, or

thy admir'd Self? May not there be Idolatry enough in any one of these? Yes, and too likely it will be so to thee, if, like this Prelate, thou dost not do Violence to the Idol, or thy self; if not by breaking, at least, by Separation: See what it cost him; think not thou of escaping, if thou expectest to do it without Pain or Trouble. Thou wilt never be Conqueror, if thou art afraid of hurting thy self.

St. *Silvester*, *December* 31.

2 *Tim.* 4. 1, 8. *Luke* 12. 35, 40.

1. HE was Bishop of *Rome*: Pray for his Successor, who at present sits in his Chair; that inheriting his Virtues, he may with a like Fidelity, take care of his Flock.

2. It was in his time, the Church, after Three Hundred Years Persecution, was restor'd to Peace, by the Command of *Constantine* the Great, who destroying the Temples of the Idols, order'd Churches every where to be built to the Living God. Pray for the Peace of the Church, and the Propagation of its Faith amongst

mongſt Heathens and Unbelievers, that Idolatry being deſtroy'd, the Name of God may be ſanctified in all Nations of the Earth.

3. It was under him *Arius* denied and preach'd againſt the Divinity of Jeſus Chriſt, and was condemn'd by the *Nicene* Fathers, who declar'd, what had been receiv'd from the Apoſtles; That the Son was Conſubſtantial with the Father, and God Equal with him. Pray againſt the like Errors of this Unbelieving Age, in which, under the Chriſtian Name, are promoted all the Blaſphemies of *Arius* and *Socinus*; Pray, that God would make their Abettors ſenſible of their Errors, and preſerve all unwary Chriſtians from their Poyſon.

All the Predeceſſors of this great Prelate having been crown'd with Martyrdom by the Perſecution of Infidels, it cannot be doubted, but St. *Silveſter*, entring into their Charge, was prepar'd in Soul, and expected to follow their Steps; but God was pleaſed in his time to give Peace to the Church; and the Faithful, who for Three Hundred Years, had been confin'd, in all their Worſhip of God, to Caves and Dens, the only ſhelter againſt the

Malice of Unbelievers, now by the Favor of *Constantine*, miraculously Converted to the Christian Faith, began to appear in Public, and with unspeakable joy solemnly profess, what till then they had never Liberty to own. Then it was the Idols were thrown down, the Temples destroy'd, or converted to a better use, and Churches every where order'd to be Built for the Service and Worship of the God of Heaven. This Peace restor'd to the Church requires our solemn Praise and Thanksgiving; and on a Day, wherein we Commemorate so great a Mercy, we cannot do less than resolve to Contribute on our Parts, to the Continuation of it, by joining our best endeavors for the extirpation of whatever Remains of Idolatry are yet found in us, or amongst us.

The general abuse of Christian Solemnities, as of *Christmas*, *Easter*, *Whitsuntide*, &c. and spending those Days in very dis-edifying Liberties, in Excesses and Prophaneness, is a Relic of Idolatry; the preparing for *Lent* by a Carnaval of Sinful Extravagancies and Intemperance, is a Relic of Idolatry; the abuse of Churches and Chappels in Loose and Amorous Conversation,

in

in Sensual Gazing; in affecting Postures, Dresses and Places, to become the Objects of such Sensuality, is not only the Relic, but the Practice of Idolatry. All these are most detestable Corruptions, and involve so much of Ingratitude and Contempt of God, that I don't question, the Heathens Worshipping of Idols are far less provoking than these Abominations of Profess'd Christians. For if Heathens Worship Idols, 'tis Worshipping what they believe; and if they, to efface the Memory of Christianity, upon the Places Sacred to Christ's Passion and Burial, built Temples to *Venus* and *Adonis*, it was only the Natural Consequence of their Infidelity. But for this to be done by the Hands of Christians, in Contradiction to that Light, God's Goodness has given them for their Salvation; in Opposition to all those Mysteries and Mercies, which they profess to Believe and Honor; what shall I say? This has such a Complication of all that's Criminal and Scandalous, that infinit Woes are to be pronounc'd against it, and its Judgment, no doubt, will be infinitly more Terrible, than that of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*. These are Sins we are to Lament this Day; and

while we give Thanks for Idolatry formerly destroy'd and giving way to Christianity, we are now to bewail Christianity giving way to Idolatry: We are to join Prayers to our Tears, and implore the Mercy of God, for the Remedy of these Abominations; beseech him to give Zeal and Courage to all Prelates and Pastors, to Labor in their Reformation, and make all sensible of their Crime, who not only have a Part in, but likewise any ways Contribute to, Connive at, or Countenance these Evils. 'Tis thus we may Hope to prevent the dismal Effects of such Public Provocations, which often draw Terrible Judgments, not only on the Actors, but on whole Nations, in the total extirpation of Religion, which has been thus abus'd. The Prospect of almost all *Asia* and *Africa*, in which the Christian Religion flourish'd for so many Ages, but now overrun with Turks and Infidels, is sufficient to terrifie any that consider it; which general Calamity cannot be laid so much to the prevailing Power of Enemies, as to the Irreligion and Wickedness of Christians, who drew this Scourge upon themselves and their Children: And the weight of this Justice

Justice all other Nations have Reason to apprehend, who mix so much of Idolatry with the Solemn Exercises of their Religion, who sanctifie the greatest Festivals of Mercy with Debaucheries, and pollute his Temples with their Lewdness and Sensuality: For these Sins cry aloud for Vengeance; and what juster Vengeance, than that of so many other Nations, in which a Universal Overthrow of Religion has been the Punishment of their Irreligious Practices?

But the defeat of Irreligion and Idolatry is not to be the only subject of this Days Prayers; we must implore the Divine Assistance against the spreading Errors of *Arius* too; I do not mean those Speculative Errors only, which too many take up, who strongly adhering to the Dictates of Sense and private Reason, do not understand, that Faith is the Reason of a Christian; but rather those Practical Errors, which are so wholly opposit to what Christ has taught, that they seem to be an Implicit denial of Christ being God: Errors, which maintain and justifie an Unchristian Life with the Profession of the Gospel; and are such as, like the Blasphemies of *Arius*, break out and

and appear with greater Strength, upon the Churches Peace. The Life, which Christ has taught, and the whole Gospel recommends, is a Life of Self denial, of Crucifying and Dying to the World and the Flesh, a Life of Labor, Mortification and Penance, a Life of Humility and Charity, a Life of the Cross, a Life which seeks God, and a better World, and not this: Such was the Life of Christians, for those First Three Hundred Years, when Cruel Persecution oppress'd the Church, and all its Members were not Solicitous only to believe in Christ, but so to Practice the Rules he left, that they might be ever ready to offer themselves a Sacrifice to him; the World was little to them, which they expected every Day to leave; their Life was a daily Cross; Suffering was not their Affliction, but their Joy; a perpetual Charity was their Exercise; Bearing Reproaches and Contempts they took to be their Portion; and their great Business was not how to Live, but how to Die: In this manner the first Christians divided not the Life of Christ from their Belief in him; they knew both parts were his Commands, and in both gave Demonstration of their

their Faith, confounding the Errors of *Arius* in this their Acknowledgment, in Heart and Works, of Christ being God.

But when the Persecution ceas'd, the Abuse of Peace brought many Evils amongst the Faithful; for tho' they were not at first wanting in giving Thanks to God; and a Return of Troubles did often make them sensible of this Blessing; yet a long Quiet much lessen'd the Value of it, and by degrees, with Peace crept in Pride and Ambition, the Love of Pleasure, Interest and Ease; and Dangers being now remov'd, they were more Solicitous how to enjoy this World, and be happy here, than to make Provision for a Life to come: Thus Mortification, the Practice of Humility, and the Gospel-Spirit, was much diminish'd; Custom and Authority gave still Strength to these Corruptions, till at length a Faith in Christ was too generally found amongst Christians, but not the Gospel-life: These Evils, tho' often meeting with the Opposition of many Pious Souls, have ever encreas'd, and been brought down to our unhappy Days, and now seem so confirm'd by the Example of all Degrees, that not to approve and

join

join with them, ſeems a deſerv'd Reproach, is become Folly and Scandal, not to Jews and Gentiles, but to Chriſtians too. All now tends to Liberty, Pride, Intemperance and Self-love; the Common Buſineſs is to ſeek this World, and pleaſe our Selves; Ill Cuſtoms are not to be reprov'd, but follow'd, and Ill Practices prevail againſt the Law of God; Vanity, Luxury, Concupiſcence, Frauds, Lying, and Over-reaching, tho' formerly condemn'd, are now conſiſtent with Religion, and a Faith in Chriſt: And what is all this, but *Practic Arianiſm?* Is not this in Fact diſowning Chriſt's Divinity? This is declaring the nullity of his Commands, and that his Precepts are not neceſſary; 'tis laying the Goſpel by, and following another Rule. They who entirely believe in Chriſt, believe him to be the Eternal Truth, the Only Way to Life, and that there can be no Security to thoſe, who take another Way: What better Judgment then is to be made of ſuch, who, Neglecting his Commands, go on ſtill with Hopes of Heaven, but that they diſown him to be the Truth, the Life, the Way; and deny in Works, what *Arius* did in Words? If Chriſt be God, where is the Honor and Obedience

dience due to his Law? This was the Prophet's Test, or rather of God himself; and where this is not, there is not that Faith, which God requires: And yet this is the Faith, in which most Christians rest: They no sooner come under the shelter of Heavenly Blessings, in Peace and Plenty, but the more Substantial Part of Religion and the Gospel begins to fail; the Desire of Satisfying their own Corrupt Passions, excludes Self-denial, Courting the World, leaves no Place for the Maxims of Humility; the Love of Ease lets them not stoop to the then unbecoming Labors of the Gospel: Thus is the Gospel Lost under its Profession, and a Faith in Christ comes to be little more than a Form of Words. These are the Errors, which call upon all Christians for their hearty Prayers; That God would be pleas'd to revive the Primitive Spirit now in our Days, whereby besides Believing, all might Labor to manifest in themselves the Life of Christ. Pray in particular for thy self, that as in this Day we end the Year, so thou may'st put an end to all thy former Method, in which thou hast more regarded the World and thy Self, than God. Resolve to make the best use

uſe of Peace, and fence thy Heart againſt all its Dangers; Examin at preſent, whether thou perverteſt not the Bleſſings of Heaven, and takeſt not thence occaſion of ungratefully Offending more againſt the Giver: Ask Pardon for all thy paſt Ingratitude, and beg now Grace, that with the Year may end all the diſorders of it.

JANUARY.

The *Circumciſion*, *January* 1.

Tit. 2. 11, 15. *Luk.* 2. 21.

1. 'TIS the Firſt Day of the New Year: Conſecrate it all to God, thy Thoughts, Words and Actions: Beg Grace for the Exact performing all thy Obligations, to be ſupported in all Dangers, and preſerv'd from Sin.

2. On this Day Chriſt ſubjected himſelf to the Law of Circumciſion, and firſt ſhed his Sacred Blood for thee: Give him Thanks: Pray for Grace, for the ready compliance with all the Laws of God, and reſolve to do it, tho' at the expence of thy Blood.

3. On

3. On this Day of his Humiliation, was given him the Holy Name of Jesus: Offer thy self to Jesus; beseech him to make thee a true Follower of him in all Humility, that thou may'st be of the Number of those, who are to be sav'd by him: Beg Pardon for the many times thou hast abus'd or prophan'd that his Sacred Name, and be careful to do it no more.

It being on the Day of Christ's Circumcision, that he receiv'd the Name of *Jesus* or *Savior*, we have in this a great Instruction given us, of the Necessity of a Christian or Spiritual Circumcision; and that he will be a Savior to none but those, in whom this Circumcision is found: This is the Condition of the Salvation he offers: He begins the Work of our Redemption by a Legal Circumcision; and we are to partake of his Redemption by Circumcision of Heart *Circumcide te præputium Cordis vestri.* What this is, and how to practice it, is to be the Lesson of this Day.

The Word *Circumcision* signifies *Retrenching* or *Cutting off*, and imports a Duty we have of Cutting off whatever is *Destructive* of the Christian Spirit, or *Inconsistent* with it. Hence all that de-

sign

ſign to live as they profeſs, are in the firſt place under an indiſpenſible Obligation of Cutting off all Habitual Sin; becauſe this is an Engagement of a Soul in ſuch things, which God has expreſly declar'd contrary to his Law and Will, the Accompliſhment of which is to be the Chriſtian's Rule; and therefore the Living in any ſuch Engagement, is living in a State of Wilful Diſobedience and Contempt of God, and of Rebellion againſt his Law; and ſuch a State, Evacuating the whole Goſpel, can have no other Fruit, but of Damnation, in being eternally Separated from God, to conſummate the Separation made choice of in this Life. Secondly, they are oblig'd to Cut off all the *Immediate Occaſions* of theſe Sins, becauſe theſe Occaſions have ſuch a Connexion with the Sins themſelves, that there can be no Sincerity in pretending to admit the one and avoid the other; and 'tis impoſſible to apprehend, that a Soul ſhould be truly converted to God, and have a hearty Deteſtation of Sin, as the Goſpel requires, which is pleas'd with the Familiarity of ſuch dangers, which are, as it were, a Violence upon it, and almoſt inſeparable from Sin. All the

Thoughts

Thoughts therefore in such unhappy Sinners, of Repentance and returning to God, can be no other than Treacherous Delusions, whilst they pretend to be sorry for having Offended, and yet think nothing of quitting that Company and those Practices, which have been the continual Occasions of all their past Offences; and therefore the omitting to Cut off these, is what excludes them from any part in the Mercies of a Redeemer.

Thirdly, they are oblig'd to Cut off other more remote Occasions of Sin; but then, as there are different degrees in these, so there is likewise in the Obligation of Retrenching them; it being in some more Absolute and Pressing than in others, according to the Connection they have with Sin; which differing according to Circumstances and Tempers, must be determin'd in particular by conferring with Spiritual Directors. However, some General Rules may be propos'd as the Obligation every one has of Cutting off whatever considerably helps to heighten those Inclinations and Passions, which Alienate the Mind from the Love of God, and lead to Sin. Hence the Good Christian is very careful in the

the choice of his Company and Conversation: For since the General Discourse of the World is a Communication of Worldly Principles, the Effusion of Error and Pride, and other Passions, a Soul that indifferently exposes himself to Company, is in danger of being Infected with all this Poyson: The same caution he uses in reading Books; because too many of these favor Concupiscence and Corruption so much, that frequent Reading them must necessarily make Impressions, and insensibly Work upon the Soul, to the great prejudice of all its Spiritual Concerns: 'Tis the same, as to all manner of Shews and Diversions, because he sees the great Mischief of all these Particulars; inasmuch as they are the Common Ways, by which the Devil deludes Souls into all manner of Sinful Liberties and Wickedness: There being scarce any to be found of all those, who live Reprobates to God, but what by Company and Books have been first brought to renounce the Innocence of their Pious Education. Whatever therefore his Affections or Inclinations be, he carefully Cuts off so much of all that, to which these lead him,

him, as he has Reason to suspect, dangerous to his Eternal Concern.

This his Care likewise extends to whatever considerably disturbs that *Good Order* and *Discipline*, which ought to be observ'd in his own Person or Family. For tho' these are not number'd amongst the Virtues, yet they have place amongst the Christian Duties, inasmuch as 'tis the Obligation of every Christian, to be Watchful in that, which is the best Fence and Security of a Christian Life, and without which it must necessarily be expos'd to the evident danger of being wholly overthrown: It being a like absurdity to think of Maintaining a Christian Life, without Order and Discipline, as to Support any Civil or Military Government without it. However therefore it is but inconsiderable, and often necessary upon occasion, to break the Order of Praying, Eating, Working, Sleeping, *&c.* yet whoever comes to lose all regard to this Order, and lets every Humor and Inclination take place of it, there's so much hazard in this undisciplin'd Way, that, without Rashness, one may fear and even judge, if he be not already lost, it cannot be very long before

2°

fore he be so. For this going out of all Method, involves such variety of Neglects, draws so many ill Consequences after it, and betrays so great a Stock of Self-love, and desire of Satisfying Private Inclinations, with a preference of these to Ordinary Duties, that it cannot be long consistent with a Christian Life.

For this Reason, the Good Christian, ever apprehensive of being insensibly carried out of the Way, is not only careful, for its prevention, in keeping up Disciplin, and observing good Order in himself and Family; but is likewise very Watchful in Retrenching whatever he perceives of this World, is apt to Possess his Heart, and likely to divert it from God; and this not only in respect of Sinful Objects, but also of all Love of the World, Love of Temporal or Secular things, in a Word, of all Love of Creatures. Because finding his Heart turn'd from God, thro' that Original Corruption, which it brings into the World, and desirous, by the Enjoyment of Creatures, to fill up that Want it perceives within it self, in being deprived of its Only and Substantial Good, he in this plainly discovers, that all this desire of Crea-

Created Enjoyments, is nothing but the effect of Corruption, and of his Natural Concupiſcence, which comprehends generally all that, which the Affections, tend to out of God; and in Cutting off and Mortifying this Deſire, as much as may be, conſiſts the true Chriſtian's Exercise and Circumciſion of Heart.

And this he undertook in Baptiſm, when becoming the Child of God, he promis'd to renounce all thoſe Inclinations, he brought with him into the World, which naturally and violently carry him to Sin, to Earth, and to Creatures, and ſolemnly engag'd to follow thoſe New Impreſſions, he then receiv'd, which lead him to the Love of God, to Religion, and to the Search of Heavenly things, by a Separation from Creatures. And tho', thro' that Corruption, which is in him, he cannot follow theſe New Impreſſions without Violence to Nature, yet having taken on him this Obligation, he conſiders it his Duty ever to uſe this Violence to it; this is his Exerciſe, as long as he is in this Life, in which he finds great difficulties; but he that undertook to be his Redeemer by the effuſion of his Blood, has this Day taught him,

him, he is not to expect any part in this Redemption without Difficulties and Trouble: And therefore encourag'd by his Example, he resolutly offers himself to all these; looks for them as part of his Portion, to which he is call'd; and, tho' Frail of himself, yet Hopes, thro' his Grace, and the Assistance of his Holy Spirit, to hold out to the end, with a Cheerful Submission, and a Patience untir'd, till that happy Hour comes, when he may say, *Consummatum est*: All is finish'd. For this end he puts himself this Day under the Covert of the Sacred Name of Jesus, hoping, under that Protection, daily to receive a constant supply of Courage and Comfort, that he may go on in the Practice of a Spiritual Circumcision, in the same Spirit with him that taught it. Grant me, O Jesus, this thy Holy Spirit, that I may ever remember this Lesson thou givest me, and duly practice it: And whenever my Corrupt Nature is carrying me to Sin, to the love of this World, or of Creatures, powerfully check my Inclinations, and say to my Soul, I am thy Salvation.

Octave of St. *Stephen*, *Jan.* 2.

Act. 6. 8, 10. *and* 7. 54, 60. *Mat.* 23. 34, 39.

1. RENew, on this Day, thy Prayers for all thy Enemies: God's Mercy is open to the worſt of them; if thou exclud'ſt them from thy Charity, ſuſpect thy Charity to be nothing but Self-love, no better than that of the Publican or Heathen.

2. Pray for all thoſe, who, like *S. Stephen*'s Enemies, are Obſtinate in their Evil Ways: That all Hardneſs of Heart being remov'd, they may be ſenſible of the Impreſſions of Divine Grace.

3. Pray for all, that are Obſtinate againſt the Truth, that they may not reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt, in wilfully Rejecting and being Deaf to all thoſe Helps, he has ordain'd for the diſcovery of their Errors; that they may not be deceiv'd with the Poſitiveneſs of their own Conceptions, nor Build their Faith on Principles of Education, or Paſſion, which can ſtand on no other Foundation than the Aſſurance of God's Holy Spirit. To Condemn, upon Report, without having firſt made a due Inquiry, is the Juſtice of thoſe, who took up Stones againſt S. *Stephen*.

We are first to seek, and then may Hope to find: But to be Confident of having found the Truth, without ever seeking it, is not the Method of the Promise, but of a Presumption, which keeps the Turk and Jew in the Errors of their Education, as well as the mis-believing Christian.

Octave of St. *John*, *Jan.* 2.

Ecclus 15. 16. *Jo.* 21. 19, 24.

1. PRay on this Festival of the Evangelist, that thy whole Life may be regulated by the Gospel, and not by the World. Thus it ought to be in every Christian: See, how much thou failest in this Method.

2. Pray for that Evangelical Virtue of Purity, so eminent in this Apostle. Avoid whatever may be Prejudicial to it; tho' it be as dear or as necessary as thy Hand or Eye, cut it off; for nothing's to take place of Eternity.

3. Pray for the Constancy of this Apostle, who continued at the Foot of the Cross, notwithstanding all that Violence of a furious People. Pray for a like Fidelity: And See that Self-love make thee not forsake the Way of the Cross.

Croſs. When thou Studieſt to pleaſe thy ſelf, thou leaveſt the Croſs.

Octave of Holy Innocents, Jan. 4.

Apoc. 14. 1, 5. *Mat.* 2. 13, 18.

1. PRay for the Grace of God, for the direction of all Parents in the Education of their Children, that by avoiding both Extremes of Fondneſs and Neglect, they may be the happy Inſtruments of bringing them into a better World.

2. Pray, thou may'ſt make ſo good uſe of whatever Injuries, Malice or Injuſtice fall upon thee, that they may be a like Advantage to thy Soul, as Perſecution was to theſe Infants; *Heroa*'s Cruelty being their Crown.

3. Reſolve peaceably to ſubmit under all the Appointments of God; he makes all things ſerve to the Accompliſhment of his Deſigns. *Heroa*'s Cruelty publiſh'd Chriſt's Birth, and was for the Sanctification of his Elect. And there is no diſorder of Men ſo great, but what is ſerviceable in the Order of his Goodneſs. Wonder there-

fore at nothing that happens, but submit to all; leaving all to him, whose Hand and Eye is over all.

Octave of St. *Thomas* of *Canterbury*, *January* 5.

Heb. 5. 1, 6. *Jo.* 10. 11, 16.

1. PRay for all Pastors in God's Church, that with Zeal and Diligence they may discharge their Duties: That the Salvation of Souls, and performing the Will of God, may put them upon Sacrificing themselves wholly to his Service, and to the good of their Flock.

2. Pray, they may all Instruct their Flock, by Word and Example, and first Practice the Gospel, which they Preach. If any fail in their Duty, and become a Scandal to their Character, Pray heartily for them; Expose them not; be apprehensive of thy self; but let not their Irregularity harden thee in Sin; for tho' their Damnation will be much the greater, yet thine will be a Hell too.

3. Pray for all Pastors, that they may

may Inherit the true Spirit of the Apoſtles: That they may Betray no Weakneſs in ſeeking or loving the things of this World; that while others purſue what is Temporal, they may truly ſay; The Lord is our Portion: That they may with a Watchful Eye ſuperintend their Charge; not permitting thoſe to Eat the Fruits of the Vinyard, who refuſe to Work in it: Nor allowing thoſe to Wear the Shepherds Weed, who are truly Wolves, continually devouring the Flock by their Diſorders and Scandalous Liberties. O God, when wilt thou have regard to thy Fold, and deliver it from theſe Deſtroying Evils!

This being likewiſe the Day of St. Edward

THE Confeſſor and King of *England*, remember this Day thy King and Country: Pray for a Bleſſing on it of Peace, and whatever elſe may be for its Spiritual and Temporal Advantage. Pray for the removal of Vice and Error, that we may be all United in Virtue and Truth. Pray for all in Of-

fices of Trust, that Truth and Justice may have the only Power in their Administration.

Vigil. of *Epiph.*

Gal. 4. 1, 7. *Mat.* 2. 19, 23.

The *Epiphany* or *Twelfth-day*, *January* 6.

Isai. 60. 1, 6. *Mat.* 2. 1, 12.

1. GIve thanks, this Day, to Christ our Redeemer, who was Pleas'd to manifest himself to the Gentils, and thus open the Way to Salvation. Pray for those great Number of Gentils, who as yet sit in Darkness, and know not God; that God would please to call them to his Faith.

2. Pray [illegible] may be ever Imitate the Zeal and Diligence of the Three Kings; who were no sooner call'd, but they obey'd; *Videmus & Venimus*: Who were not discourag'd with the difficulties of the Journey; but without delay set forward to find him, who call'd them. How happy would it be, could'st

~~could'st thou~~ thus readily follows where ~~thy~~ Obligation calls, and ~~not~~ let ~~every pretended~~ Difficulty ~~be sufficient to justifie thee in the frequent Omission~~ of ~~thy~~ Duty ?

3. ~~Fall down and~~ Adore Christ, and with the Three Kings acknowledge him for ~~thy~~ God and Redeemer; and fail not to ~~make thy~~ Offerings with them. Offer ~~thy~~ Hearts to him; ~~if it be thy own, or his. But~~ if it be otherwise engag'd, ~~either~~ in Riches, Pleasures, or Excessive Troubles; pray for its Deliverance; lay ~~thy~~ Gold, ~~thy~~ Frankincense and Myrrh, all at his Feet; let neither the Sweet nor Bitter keep ~~thee~~ from him; Offer all to him, who is Lord of all.

The Zeal and Courage of the Three Kings was very wonderful, who being inform'd of the Birth of Christ, by the Appearance of an Unusual Star, forthwith undertook their Journey; neither regarding the Discourses of the World, which would Charge them with Folly and Rashness; nor considering the Dangers of going to Proclaim a New-born King, at the Court of a Jealous Prince; nor apprehensive of those many Difficulties, the usual Consequences of an Uncertain Journey,

not knowing how far they were to go, nor whether they were ever to return. ~~again~~. Whenever a Soul comes up to this degree of Reſolution, there's Reaſon ~~enough~~ to Hope, it has overcome the World, ſince in this very Point conſiſts its Victory, that it admits of nothing to take place of Duty: And this is the Teſt, by which every Chriſtian may make the trueſt Judgment of himſelf. For whatever his Condition be, there's no Propoſal can be made of ſeeking Chriſt, and making any advance to him, but he muſt be neceſſarily expos'd to ſome of theſe Trials. The World will ever ~~do like it ſelf; it will certainly~~ meddle with what belongs not to it; it will curiouſly examin, diſcourſe, and paſs its Cenſures: It will condemn of Singularity, Folly and Vanity, whatever departs out of the Common Road of its looſe Maxims, and declare its Reſentments againſt every one, ~~that~~, by forſaking, diſapproves its **W**ays: So that whoever has not gain'd this Point, to be unconcern'd at what the World ſays, is not yet in a poſſibility of finding Chriſt; ſince there is not one Step he can take, whether in Prayer, Recollection, Faſting, Penance, frequenting

quenting the Sacraments, *&c.* but ~~this~~ by its Wonders, Insults and Mockeries, will be ever discouraging from the Prosecution of ~~all~~ his Pious Designs, and ~~will by this means~~ bring him to the Trial, whether his Concern for what ~~this~~ World says, be not greater than his Zeal for Duty and Justice.

Another difficulty he must meet with in respect to himself; for no one can think of going towards Christ, but he will presently discover the Way to be long, thro' the variety of interior Contradictions, and the apprehension of losing his Convenience and Ease, and the obligation of making War against his own Inclinations. This War is absolutely necessary; because his Nature being corrupt, and strongly inclining him to Self-love and the love of the World, he can no other way make approaches to Christ, than by resisting all such interior Motions, and obliging them, by a sort of Violence, to yield ~~in~~ obedience to the Law of God: Now this cannot be possibly effected, but by many uneasie Conflicts; Nature it self must be overcome, Passions must be master'd, what is Pleasing must be renounc'd, and that must be made choice of, to which Sense and

Inclination is wholly averſe; and this ſo long, till by this Exerciſe, the Soul becomes wholly chang'd, not deſiring now to follow the corrupt Principles of the Firſt *Adam*, but to live by the better Maxims of the Goſpel, even the Life of Chriſt; becauſe he knows there's no finding Chriſt, till he finds him abiding within his own Heart, and there Commanding, as ~~his~~ Lord and Sovereign.

This is the Way, and theſe the Difficulties, by which every one is to go to Chriſt. And, I believe, there are few, ~~tho' at the greateſt Diſtance from him, thro' the unhappy State of Error or Vice~~, but ~~who~~ are inform'd, like theſe Three Kings, by ſome Providencial Light, where Chriſt is to be found; and had they a Reſolution and Zeal, ~~like their's~~, to undertake the Journey, would as certainly find him, to receive their Offerings, and reward their Labors. But here's the great Inſtance of Human Weakneſs: Few follow this Light; only Three of all that Nation in the Eaſt, to which the Star appear'd; and, 'tis to be fear'd as few in other Nations, in proportion to thoſe great numbers, who now ſee enough of it to direct them to the Truth of Chriſt.

They

They have Light ſhining upon them in their Darkneſs, enough to awaken them, but, like Men oppreſs'd with ſleep, they ſhut their Eyes againſt it, and ſleep on. The Thoughts of what the World will ſay, the many Inconveniencies, as to their Buſineſs and Intereſt, the Diſpleaſure of Friends, the Difficulties of a Change, with a Thouſand other Diſcouragements, immediately preſent themſelves, and prevail ſo far on Minds unwilling to be diſturb'd, that on ſuch Motives of Self-love, they deſiſt from farther enquiry, ~~and contenting themſelves with ſome general Principles of Education, and the Company of others like themſelves,~~ they ſtifle the Light, and chuſe Darkneſs rather than Light. This Blindneſs of Chriſtians had a lively Image in the Prieſts and People of *Jeruſalem*, who being inform'd of the Birth of a New King, and Taught by Tradition the Place, where he was to be Born, ſo as to direct the Three Kings to it, yet took no care to enquire any farther after him, were not at all ſolicitous to follow, or inform themſelves of what theſe found. The People, no queſtion, ſat ſtill Contented under the Authority of their Guides, whom

whom they judg'd Wiser than they; and excus'd themselves from all Neglect, on their parts, in concluding, there could be no sufficient Reason for them to enquire after a New-born King, since their Pastors had no Concern in Searching for him: Thus they make use of False and Treacherous Reasoning against the Light of Heaven, and make it wholly void, by being too easie in trusting, what was not to be depended on: But so it generally is; Reasons, that favor our Inclination, and consult our Ease, are presently admitted; and we pretend to be Satisfied, when Motives are agreeable to present Circumstances, tho' upon a better Enquiry, they would appear very deceitful. For what if the Priests of the Jews, took no Notice of this Information of a Messias Born? Might not this be a Neglect in them? Might not this proceed from Human Motives, the Fear of losing their Authority, and being cast out of their Temporal Power? This they Betray'd afterwards, when in Council, they own'd; If we let this Man go, the *Romans* will come and take away our Place and People: Might it not be the Effect of Obstinacy and Blindness, such as harden'd them

them against the Evidence of Miracles? If then these Jewish Guides were thus Subject to such Infirmities and Wickedness, as to be so easily put by their Duty; was not the following their Example a very Fallacious Rule in the People; and only prevail'd on them, not for any certainty it carried with it, but because it was the more favorable, in excusing them from any farther trouble of enquiring? For had they been Sincere, and Zealously desirous of the Truth, they would not so easily have Slighted such a Wonderful Call from Heaven, upon Motives so very Deceitful and Uncertain, but rather have Slighted these, and taken some Pains in enquiring farther after this Light, that thus call'd upon them.

As far as Pastors are assisted with the Spirit of God (as it is in Christ's Church) and the Faithful have a Command from him to hear and believe them; so far it is safe to submit and be directed; because Christ's Promise and absolute Command, is a Security above exception. But as for those, who believe no such Divine Assistance Exempting them from Error, there deference to the Authority or Example of such Pastors, may easily be the occasion of going

ing out of the Way, in Oppoſition to that Light with which God may otherwiſe mercifully touch them. For may not ſuch Paſtors be Byaſs'd by ſome Secret Paſſion, by the conſideration of Intereſt, Reputation, Dependance, with Variety of other Private and Human Motives? Are not they Subject to all theſe Infirmities? Do we not ſee, them but too often miſled by ſuch Lights, as well as the Jewiſh Guides? Hence the deference to their Example and Authority may eaſily riſe to an Exceſs, and be Criminal in their Followers, in making uſe of ſuch unſafe Reaſons, for the ſtifling the Suggeſtions of a better Light, only becauſe they are more favorable to their preſent Inclinations. And what is the Bottom of this, but Self-love, and the want of that Sincerity and Zeal for finding Truth, which we ſee this Day, in the Example of the Three Kings? The ſame Weakneſs is in many others the occaſion of continuing in the Practice of very Dangerous Liberties, and Walking on in a Way very Unjuſtifiable and Unchriſtian: For tho' Almighty God often touches their Hearts with a Senſe of their Failings, and by an Interior Light from the Goſpel,

Good

Good Men or Books, lets them see the danger of their State, and the necessity of Reforming; yet being unwilling to forsake what pleases, and foreseeing the Difficulties of a true Conversion, they run for shelter to the Example and Authority of others, whose Learning, Place, Reputation and Character, seem to qualifie them for being a Rule: Here presently they say such an one does this; such another does that, &c. If this were not allowable and safe, certainly such as they are, would not permit or practice it, &c. Thus the example of Religious, of Priests and Prelates, is brought in, and there's scarce any kind of Vanity, Pride, Covetousness, Lightness, Excess, &c. but what are warranted and justified under this Cover. And what is the ground of all this, but Deceit and Delusion? What is this but a Vicious Partiality of Insincere Souls, who study how to delude the Designs of Infinit Goodness, and by the Treacherous Authority of Weakness it self, shut out the Light of Heaven, and harden themselves against all its Impressions? 'Tis plain, these are nothing but little Subtilties, for the putting a fair Gloss on an ill Cause; and because they have not Resolution

and

and Zeal enough to Reform, they make use of these Shifts to Color and Disguise all their Weaknesses. Were there any Sincerity in them, and Zeal for Truth and Justice, they would carefully attend to that Light of Heaven, which glancing upon them at times, puts them upon seeking farther, than they yet have done; they would join with these Sages, in finding Christ, and let no Human Respect, or the Example of others Infirmities and Errors, stop them in their Way: Such Courage and Resolution would never want the Blessing of Heaven to give success to their endeavours; and tho' the Way might be long, yet they would certainly find Christ at the end. Let this thy Light, O God of Mercy, touch the Hearts of all those, who by Vice or Error, are at a great distance from thee; give them Strength of Mind to follow it with Constancy and Perseverance, that they may never stop, till they find their Redeemer, and offer themselves at his Feet.

Within

Within the *Octave* of the *Epiphany*, *January* 7.

Ep. and Gos. as on the Feast.

EVery Day of this *Octave* ought to be repeated the Devotion of the Festival. Fail not therefore to put up thy Petitions to God.

1. Pray, that, as God call'd upon these Three Kings by a Star, so he would be pleas'd to call upon thee, and touch thy Heart by his Grace, as often as thou art going out of the Way: Pray, that his Grace may direct thee, in whatever thou undertakest, and especially in those Particulars, where thy whole Life is concern'd: Ask the same Mercy for all that belong to thee, that the Light of Heaven may be their Guide in all things, that so they may not be misled by Passion, *&c.*

2. Beg pardon for the many times thou hast obstinately resisted the Inspirations of God, and shut thy Eyes against his Light: For the many times thou hast follow'd Passion, instead of Reason, taken Interest and Self-love for thy

thy Guide, instead of Justice; firmly resolve to do so no more.

3. Pray for all that as yet sit in the Darkness of Infidelity, Error or Vice; that God would please to let his Light shine upon them, that they may come to the Knowledge of Him, His Truths, and their Duty. Let not these poor Souls want thy Charity.

Within the *Octave* of the *Epiphany*, *January* 8.

Ep. and Gos. as on the Feast.

1. PRay for the Resolution and Zeal of these Holy Men, whom neither the Love of Home, Affection to Friends, or the Apprehension of any Difficulties, hindred in their Search of Christ: Consider how much these private Considerations make thee unfaithful in thy Duty, and then see, if thou hast not something to pray for.

2. Pray for a Confidence in God like theirs, that in Difficulties and Uncertainties, thou may'st not be so easily dejected. Go ever on, where God calls, and let not Human Fears destroy that

that Hope, thou ought'ſt ever to have in Him.

3. Pray for all that as yet ſit in the Darkneſs of Infidelity, Error or Vice, that God would pleaſe to let his Light ſhine upon them, that they may come to the Knowledge of Him, His Truths, and their Duty. Let not theſe poor Souls want this thy Charity.

Within the *Octave* of the *Epiphany*, *January* 9.

Ep. and Goſ. as on the Feaſt.

1. PRay for the Conſtancy of theſe Holy Men, who when the Star diſappear'd at their Entrance into *Jeruſalem*, were not diſcourag'd, but applied themſelves to the Paſtors of the Church, to receive Information of their Way. If God, at any time, withdraws his Light and Comfort, 'tis to try thy Conſtancy; be not dejected, but adviſe with thy Director, and, full of Hope, follow on thy Way.

2. Pray for a Submiſſion like theirs, that on pretext of Revelation, or private Lights, thou may'ſt never forſake

sake the ordinary Authority of God in his Church; let neither Excess of melancholy Fears, nor a positive Adhesion to thy own Thoughts, deprive thee of this Help, which God has ordain'd for thy Conduct to Eternity. Extraordinary and Particular Ways are to be suspected of Fraud; be Cautious in following them, and never venture on it, without good Advice.

3. Pray for all that as yet sit in the Darkness of Infidelity, Error or Vice, that God would please to let his Light shine upon them, that they may come to the Knowledge of Him, His Truths, and their Duty. Let not these poor Souls want this thy Charity.

Within the *Octave* of the *Epiphany*, *January* 10.

Ep. and Gos. as on the Feast.

1. PRay for the Sincerity of these Holy Men, who learnt the Way to Christ from a Cruel *Herod*, and Wicked Priests. A sincere Soul learns Good, where-ever 'tis to be found, and passes by what is evil: If they, who teach

teach thee, have their Failings, receive their Instructions, and leave them to answer for their own Iniquity: Crooked and Deformed Pipes may convey to thee Crystal Water.

2. Pray, that in the study of Holy Writ, and in reading all Spiritual Books, thy Heart may be directed with the Sincerity and Simplicity of the Just: All thy Knowledge will be barren and unprofitable, if thou studiest not the Spirit of the Gospel: What if thou canst give an Account of the Star, if thou follow'st it not? What if thou canst tell the Place of Christ's Birth, if thou tak'st no Pains to go to him? Have a care of a Corrupt Heart, for it corrupts the best Actions.

3. Pray for all, that as yet sit in the Darkness of Infidelity, Error, or Vice, that God would please to let his Light shine upon them, that they may come to the Knowledge of Him, His Truths, and their Duty. Let not these poor Souls want this thy Charity.

Within

Within the *Octave* of the *Epiphany*, *January* 11.

Ep. and Gos. as on the Feast.

1. ADmire the adorable Conduct of God, who permitted the Search of the Scriptures, for the Hardning *Herod*'s Heart, for the Condemnation of the Priests, for the Instruction of the Faithful amongst the People, and for the Direction of the Sages and *Gentils*. Pray thou may'st never abuse that Sacred Food, and by thy Neglect or Obstinacy turn it into Poyson.

2. Pray to be delivered from the Hypocrisie of *Herod*, who made Religion serve his Ambition and Politics. Search not into the Mysteries of Religion, but to adore them; nor in the Secrets of Scripture, but to love God more; nor into his Ways, but only to walk in them, and to be the Rule of thy Life. Consider how often thou hast made the pretext of Religion and Piety stoop to thy Interest and Self-love; pray for Pardon, be asham'd and confounded.

3. Pray for all, that as yet sit in the Darkness of Infidelity, Error or Vice, that

that God would pleaſe to let his Light ſhine upon them, that they may come to the Knowledge of Him, His Truths, and their Duty. Let not theſe poor Souls want this thy Charity.

It being likewiſe the Day of S. Hyginus, *Pope and Martyr.*

Pray for our preſent Chief Biſhop, that God would bleſs and direct him in the diſcharge of his great Duty, and that he may Sacrifice all for the good of the Flock.

Within the *Octave* of the *Epiphany*, *January* 12.

Ep. and Goſ. as on the Feaſt.

1. PRay, that as the Star, which had diſappear'd, return'd again to Guide theſe Holy Men, ſo that God would never leave thee long in Darkneſs and Drineſs, but refreſh thee again with Spiritual Comforts. Hope in a Storm, that a Calm will return again. 'Tis thus God exerciſes his beſt Servants.

Servants. Never loſe thy Hope, and God will never be loſt to thee.

2. Pray, thou may'ſt make a Right uſe of all the Appointments of God; let Spiritual Light and Comfort carry thee on with greater Fervor to God in Prayer. And in time of diſcomforts, if thou can'ſt not draw near to him in Prayer, approach to him by Patience and Humility. The Humble Soul, that with Patience (tho' without Comfort) goes on, Submitting to the Hand of God, is in much the ſafer State, than he that enjoys the Sweets of the moſt Senſible Devotion. At the Hour of my Departure let my Soul (O God) be found truly Humble and Patient; but as for ſenſible Comforts, order it as thou ſhalt pleaſe, I know my Lot depends not on them.

3. Pray for all, that as yet ſit in the Darkneſs of Infidelity, Error or Vice, that God would pleaſe to let his Light ſhine upon them, that they may come to the Knowledge of Him, His Truths, and their Duty. Let not theſe Poor Souls want this thy Charity.

Octave of the *Epiphany*, *Jan.* 13.

Isa. 60. 1, 6. *Jo.* 1. 29, 34.

1. PRay for the Faith of these Three Kings, that having happily found Jesus Christ, thou may'st with them, adore and lay thy self at his Feet. How great was their Faith, to Adore God made Man, an Infant, Poor and Abandon'd! Offer thy Heart to him; that's thy Treasure. Happy Soul thou art, if every Day thou can'st offer him the Gold of Charity or Love, the Incense of Prayer, and the Myrrh of Mortification. The more thou offer'st, the more thou wilt receive from him.

2. Pray that with these Holy Men, thou may'st return home by another Way, and not that, in which thou hast hitherto walk'd: 'Tis the greatest of all Illusions to pretend to be converted, without changing thy Life, to think of going to Heaven by a Way, that leads to Hell. What if *Herod* commands thee to return back the same Way? What if unreasonable Parents or ill Company expect to find thee

the ſame? Is not God to be obey'd rather than Man? Is not his Will to take place of all other Motives?

3. Pray for all, that as yet ſit in the Darkneſs of Infidelity, Error or Vice; that God would pleaſe to let his Light ſhine upon them, that they may come to the Knowledge of Him, His Truths, and their Duty. Let not theſe Poor Souls want this thy Charity.

'Tis a very eaſie thing in Words to ſay, We offer all to Jeſus; but when we come to practice, and ſeriouſly conſider, how much we take from him of what we pretend to Offer, 'tis ſoon diſcover'd, how unfaithful we are, and that there's little Sincerity in all we do. The Firſt Offering a Chriſtian makes to God, anſwerable to the Devotion of this Solemnity, is of his Gold; and 'tis an excellent Sacrifice, when to ſatisfie the Obligation he has taken on him, he is careful in his Expences, to anſwer all the Demands of Juſtice, Charity and Reaſon: For God being the Supreme Juſtice, Charity and Reaſon, whatever is thus laid out, cannot be charg'd with Robbery or Waſte, but is given to him, to whom it belongs; and has been only expended, when God has call'd for it; whoever

whoever obſerves this Method, truly and ſincerely offers his Gold to God. But how often is it, that Chriſtians offend againſt this Rule? What is to be ſaid of thoſe, who refuſe or conſiderably delay the Payment of Debts? Juſtice calls on them for their Gold, that is, God demands it of them: If it be ſincerely Offer'd to him, why is it denied, when he requires it? What of thoſe, who are Deaf to the Crying Neceſſities of the Poor and Diſtreſs'd? And what of thoſe, who take no Care to ſupply the Exigencies of their Family, or to make Proviſion for their Children, either for their Education, or Diſpoſing of them? Here Charity, Juſtice and Duty call upon them; if their Gold be offer'd to God, why is he refus'd, when he thus poſitively demands it? Whatever part theſe Chriſtians pretend to have in the Devotion of this Solemnity, 'tis evident they are Inſincere, and cannot without Confuſion ſay, they have Offer'd their Gold to God.

And do not they alſo fall under the like Condemnation, who generally throw away their Money, I do not ſay, in Sinful and Vicious Entertainments, (theſe are otherwiſe already judg'd) but to ſatisfie their own Im-

moderate Inclinations to Vanity, Levity, Idleneſs, and Unreaſonable Diverſions? Can theſe pretend, the Gold thus ſpent, is offer'd to God? Nothing can be offer'd to God, but in ſuch things, as can be referr'd to God, wherein he can be found, whereby we may truly ſeek him, and come to him. Now tho' things of Decency and Order, and Moderate Diverſions, ſuch as Health requires, may be eaſily referr'd to God, and conſequently, the Money thus employ'd, be offer'd to him; yet who can pretend this in the other Caſes now mention'd? Can they pretend to ſeek God in their conſtant practices of Pride and Self-love, wherein they ſeek nothing beyond themſelves? Can they pretend to ſeek God in perpetual Diſſipation of their Minds, in Idleneſs, and gratifying their Senſes? Can they without Confuſion, ſay to Almighty God; O God, 'tis for thy Sake, and the Honor of thy Name, I ſpend whole Days, in Eating, Drinking, Divertiſements and Sleeping: 'Tis for thee, I am ever ſtudying my Inclinations and Eaſe, I Court the World, Pleaſe my Senſes, and Alienate my Mind from Thee? If therefore ſuch a Life cannot be referr'd to God, how can the Money

ney employ'd in it be suppos'd to be offer'd to him? It cannot be: 'Tis not offer'd to him, but taken from him; 'tis a Robbery and Sacriledge; 'tis offering Sacrifice to Idols, which belongs only to the Living God. For since 'tis Man's Duty to refer himself, all he does, and all Creatures, to his and their Last End, a Life that cannot be thus referr'd, and the Money thus laid out for maintaining such a Life, is all Impious, Idolatrous and Sacrilegious: And whatever 'tis referr'd to, whether Himself, or other Creature, that is his Idol.

Christians, besides their Gold, are to Offer Incense to Jesus, that is, their Hearts in Prayer: and such, as according to their different Circumstances, are constant in this Holy Exercise, raising up their Minds to God, in as great freedom as they are able, laying by all other Concerns for that time, or, to the best of their power, putting by whatever Distracts; such as these, I say, who thus duly pay their Homage to God, in Praise and Adoration, in acknowledging their Dependance, and humbly, but earnestly, soliciting for his Assisting Grace, no question, but they Offer Incense to him. But

when Prayer, thro' Sloth, love of Eaſe and Sleep, unſeaſonable Divertiſements and Company, or Idle Impertinencies, is generally neglected, haſtily, and without Application, run over; when 'tis perform'd with Voluntary or Affected Diſſipations of the Mind, can this be Offering Incenſe? Where's the Fire, the Flame, or the Sweet Savor aſcending before our Lord? Here's nothing but Dead Aſhes at the beſt, and too often, a Stinking and Offenſive Vapor. The Spirit of theſe Chriſtians waſtes it ſelf on Worldly Affairs, ſo that when they come to God, 'tis wholly Loſt or Spent; their Thoughts are, where their Treaſure is, and they are very unhappy, becauſe they have not this in God. I fear the beſt of us have a great deal to reform in this Point of our Devotions, and in the Incenſe we pretend to offer; and I wiſh every one would ſeriouſly look into themſelves, and diſcover the Root of this Neglect. We are not Angels, 'tis true, and therefore cannot Adore our God with our Hearts ſo wholly center'd in him, as they do: Being encompaſs'd with Infirmities, we are not to be Surpriz'd nor Dejected at our Weakneſs, but be Humbled in the frequent Experience of it:

it: And yet all is not to be charg'd on Infirmity: Neglect, Stupidity, the the Love of the World, and our ſelves, have too great a ſhare; for if we lov'd God, and had that Concern in ſeeking firſt the Kingdom of Heaven, as we are oblig'd, no queſtion, our Hearts and Thoughts would be better fix'd on theſe Objects, than now too generally they are. We are led more by Senſe than by Faith; 'tis our Weakneſs, but ſuch as, if not laboriouſly oppos'd, muſt be very Criminal.

Chriſtians have ſtill another Offering to make, and that's of Myrrh, not leſs difficult than the former; an Offering of every thing that Afflicts and Mortifies. This they do, who humbling themſelves under all Troubles, accept them, as from God's Hand, and refer them again to him, a Sacrifice of Juſtice and Adoration, United to that Victim, which Chriſt offer'd of himſelf upon the Croſs; for the Suffering and Pains of all the Members united to the Head are but one Sacrifice, even the Sacrifice of Chriſt, and will be accepted by the Father from all thoſe, who ſincerely offer it to him. Not but that there muſt be expected ſtill, even in the beſt, while in this

imperfect State, great reluctancies and uneasiness of Sense and Nature; for these having a great and irremediable Aversion to every thing that Afflicts and gives Disquiet, will, as often as they are in these Circumstances, express this Aversion in Complaints and Sighs, and repeated Suggestions of Rebelling against that Hand which thus afflicts them. But this must not discourage, for since our Divine Leader experienc'd these Struggles within himself, and permitted Nature to express its dislike to his approaching Passion, in desires of having that Cup pass away, if it were possible; he has in this taught us, that this Contradiction of Nature, is not at all Injurious to the Christian's Sacrifice, if it be but over-rul'd by the Power of Grace, and forc'd to submit to his Dispositions, who Governs all: Such a Submission accompanied with Humility and Patience under all Troubles, Unites them to the Sacrifice of the Cross, and is truly the Offering of Myrrh.

But then how careful ought the Christian to be, after the surprize and Disorder of the first Assault, to Compose and Moderate all Interior Disturbance, and ever to Suppress it, upon its

its first return! How unseasonable are all Passionate Complaints, the Impatient Desires of Death, Melancholy Amusements, Anxious and Dejecting Thoughts! How ought all manner of distrust be Baniſh'd! None of these are fit Companions for the Cross, where Humility prepares, Patience guards, and Perseverance compleats the Sacrifice. Anger, Imprecation, affected and studied Resentments, Contentions and Desires of Revenge, are still more unfitting; for these wholly evacuate the Offering, remove it from *Calvary*, and and make it resemble the unprofitable Sufferings of Hell, where those unhappy Souls suffer indeed, but thro' their Pride, Fury and Dispair, are ever encreasing their own Damnation; and having nothing in them of those Acceptable Qualities of their Suffering Redeemer, have consequently nothing in them, to which God can have any regard.

In this threefo'd Offering now mention'd of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh, is comprehended the whole Practice of a Christian Life; and we never offend, but by being unmindful and faithless in the Duties of this Solemnity. Teach us therefore, O Jesus,

ſincerely to make this Offering to thee, and ſo ſtrengthen us by thy Grace, that however ſometimes, thro' Infirmity, we may forget our ſelves; yet that the Main Body of our Actions may ever be directed by the Obligations we take upon us this Day, in conſtantly and faithfully giving what we now have offer'd to thee.

St. *Hilarius*, An. 355. *Jan.* 14.

2 *Tim.* 4. 18. *Matt.* 5. 13, 19.

HE liv'd with ſo much Regularity and Recollection in a Conjugal State, that he was made choice of, for his Extraordinary Virtues, to be Biſhop of that Dioceſs wherein he liv'd: Pray for all thoſe, who have the Care of Families; they have the Charge of them under God, being his Vicegerents, and muſt give an account of all the diſorders, whether in Children or Servants, occaſion'd by their ill Example or Neglect. How few Families do'ſt thou know, in which Chriſtian Diſciplin and Order is obſerv'd! Thoſe, who ſhould give the Example are Irregular; and

and what becomes of those, who are under their charge? Spare not thy Prayers in a subject, which demands thy Tears; and if thou hast any part in this Duty, pray thou may'st be Faithful in it; beg Pardon for past Errors, and take effectual Care to amend. Think not thy Charge little; weigh it in all its particulars, and thou will find it very great.

2. Being made Bishop of *Poictiers*, he applied himself wholly to the discharge of his Duty, stood resolutely against the Enemies of the Christian Faith, by Preaching, Writing and Disputing, opposing the then prevailing Errors of the *Arians*. Pray for the Extirpation of all Errors, especially that of the *Arians*, as likewise all others contrary to Christ and the Truths of his Gospel: Pray for all the Bishops of Christ's Church, that in their Piety, Vigilancy and Zeal, they may follow this Example in reforming all Abuses Destructive of Faith and Good Life. Do thy part in being an Advocate for Truth by thy good Example.

It being likewise the Day of S. **Felix,**

Priest and Martyr; Pray for all under

der that Character: The Variety of disorders in Men of that State, calls upon thee for thy most Fervent Prayers; fail not therefore to importune Heaven in their behalf: Remember also all those, who are under any Affliction, that God would mercifully deliver them, or give them Grace to suffer with Patience, for the gaining an Eternal Crown.

St. *Paul*, An. 343. *Jan.* 15.

Phil. 3. 7, 12. *Mat.* 11. 25, 30.

1. HE was the First Ermit, who, to decline the Persecution of *Decius* and *Valerian*, went into the Desart at the Age of Fifteen: Pray for the Light of Heaven, that thou may'st seriously consider the Persecution thou art under: Ill Company is a Persecution, Evil Habits are a Persecution, Pride, Vanity, the Love of thy self and the World is a Persecution, all thy Violent Passions and Perverse Inclinations, with the many Encouragements thou daily meet'st with to Excite, Feed and Strengthen them, are a Persecution.

Compare

Compare these with thy ordinary Weakness, and see whether thou hast not Reason to think thy self in danger? Why should'st thou not then resolve to withdraw for thy own Security? There's no need of finding a Desart; the World may be a Solitude to thee, if thou art but Resolute enough to separate thy self from the unnecessary dangers of it: These thou too often createst to thy self, in Favor of thy Sensuality, Pride and Self-love: Pray for Grace truly to discern, and then to overcome them.

2. He liv'd in the Desart about an Hundred Years, Cloth'd with the Leaves of Trees Feeding on Dates and Bread, (a Crow bringing him daily half a Loaf, as S. *Jerom* relates in his Life) and Drinking at the Fountain. Pray thou may'st understand something of this Spirit: A little is sufficient to sustain Nature: All beyond this is some degree of Excess. 'Tis the Will of God thou should'st Eat and Drink, that thou may'st preserve the Life he has given thee, and so far 'tis a Duty and Act of Justice: But if in Eating and Drinking thou studiest to indulge a disorderly Appetite; what is this but an Abuse? 'Tis an Act of Injustice, in feeding that, which thou art oblig'd to weaken

weaken and overcome: And what is all thy Expence in this Way, but defrauding the Poor, who have a Right to all that is Superfluous to thee? To what account wilt thou Place all that is thus laid out? Consider, whether it will be accepted by him, who cannot be impos'd on with vain pretexts. Reflect too on this Life of Penance: If these Holy Men did so much, to secure their Salvation; hast not thou Reason to be jealous of thy self, who do'st so little, and even declinest whatever is design'd to Mortifie? If theirs was the Way to Heaven, is thine so too, who takest a quite contrary Method?

It being likewise the Day of S. Maurus, An. 560.

A Disciple of S. *Benedict*; Pray for all the Religious of that Order, that in Piety and all Christian Discipline, they may follow the Example of these their Holy Predecessors and Founders.

St. *Marcellus*, An. 308. *Jan.* 16.

2. *Cor.* 1. 3, 7. *Mat.* 16. 24, 27.

1. HE was Biſhop of *Rome*: Pray for the preſent Biſhop of that See, that God would pleaſe to aſſiſt him with his Heavenly Grace, anſwerable to the greatneſs of his Charge: Pray for all other Biſhops and Paſtors of Chriſt's Church.

2. He was a Martyr: For refuſing to Worſhip and Sacrifice to Idols, being oblig'd by the Emperor *Maxentius* to take Care of Horſes and Swine, in this mean Employment, ſubmitted to with a wonderful Humility and Patience, he ended his Days: Pray for a Spirit like his, that thou may'ſt be ready to embrace all manner of Humiliations. God may be ſerv'd in all States; be but Faithful, and God will be ſo too: If thy Lot and manner of Life be Contemptible to the World, Patience and Humility will make it Honorable in the Sight of God: *Marcellus* in the Stable was greater than *Marcellus* in the Chair: Grieve not therefore, nor be uneaſie at thy Condition,

tion, whatever it be: The Laborious Christian is much better than the Idle one; he that Eats by the Sweat of his Brow, is in much the safer Way, than he that lives at Ease. If thy difficult Circumstances will not allow thee the time, thou desir'st, to Pray; remember that Patience and Humble Suffering and Laboring is all Praying; God regards not the Form, but a Sincere Heart. Pray what thou can'st, and for the rest, never doubt but thy Desires will be heard.

St. *Anthony*, An. 358. *Jan.* 17.

Eccius. 45. 1, 6. *Luk.* 12. 35, 40.

1. HAving heard these Words read in the Gospel; *If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all thou hast, and give it to the Poor, and follow me*; he understood it as spoke to him; sold all he had, and Distributed it to the Poor: Pray for a like Obedience to all the Commands of Christ; and that as often, as thou readest the Scripture, it may be with like Fruit to thy Soul. Pray for Poverty of Spirit, that thy Affections being

ing taken off the things of this World, thou may'st be ever in readiness to forsake all. If thou findest thy Heart too eagerly set on any thing here, hast not thou Reason to judge thy self unsafe? If forsaking Creatures be the Way of Perfection, must not the seeking and loving them be very Dangerous?

2. He retir'd from his Father's House into a Desart, where he liv'd in the Exercise of Prayer, Rigorous Fasting, and the Constant Practice of all Virtues, to the Age of an Hundred and Five Years. He separated himself from all Creatures, as much as was possible, that his Heart might not be withdrawn from God: Pray for this Spirit; thy Obligation of seeking and loving God is as great as his: But thy difficulty of doing it, is so much greater than his, as thou art more engag'd with the Creatures than he was. 'Tis very hard not to love those Creatures, which thou enjoy'st with Satisfaction; and as far as thou lovest them, is not thy Heart so far drawn from God; is it not so far in Danger of preferring them to God? If then the Life of Hermits, who had quitted the World, was so mortifi'd; is not a greater Watchfulness and Self-denial necessary for thee, who

who art in a Poſt of much greater danger than they were? See then, that thy Prayer, Watchfulneſs and Mortification, be anſwerable to the Dangers of thy State.

3. In that Retirement he was Aſſaulted with much greater Temptations, than he had experienc'd before: But he went on with Courage, not fearing what the Devil could do againſt him; Pray for a Reſolution and Conſtancy like his: Be not Dejected with the moſt Violent Temptations; the Devil may terrifie, but he cannot hurt thee, except thou art willing. If God be pleas'd thus to exerciſe thee, ſubmit to the Trouble of it with Patience and Humility, ever placing thy Confidence in his Aſſiſtance. A peaceable Devotion carries ſenſible Comforts with it, and is more ſuitable to thy Inclination: but if God calls thee to Battel, 'tis more uneaſie 'tis true, to Self-love, but 'tis a Life, as of greater Exerciſe, ſo of greater Virtue, and if thou overcomeſt, will receive the greater Crown. Grant me Grace, O God, that I may never draw Temptations on my ſelf; and make me Faithful in all thoſe, thou ſhalt permit for ym Trial. O, when will the time come,

come, that I ſhall be deliver'd from theſe dangers, and ſerve thee in a Perfect Peace in the Company of the Bleſſed !

St. *Peter*'s Chair at *Rome*, An. 44. *January* 18.

1. *Pet.* 1. 1, 7. *Mat.* 16. 13, 19.

1. S. *Peter* having founded the Church at *Antioch*, and eſtabliſh'd the Goſpel in *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, &c. came afterwards to *Rome*, where he Erected his Epiſcopal Chair: Give Praiſe to the Infinit Goodneſs of God, who thus directed his Apoſtle to the Capital City of the World, which being once converted to the Faith of Chriſt, might with ſo much Eaſe eſtabliſh it in all Nations and Provences ſubject to its Power. Hence it was we receiv'd the Goſpel; and therefore 'tis a Day wherein we are concern'd as well as *Rome*, and requires thy Thankſgiving for this Conduct of the Divine Goodneſs, ordaining the means of our Salvation.

2. It was by this means that City, in

in which was crouded all the Superſtition and Idolatry of the whole World, and therefore call'd *Babylon*, was purg'd of its Errors, ſanctified by the Faith of Chriſt, and made the Center of the Chriſtian Communion; Pray for that See now, that God may be ever its Protector, and the Goſpel its Rule. Pray for all thoſe Nations which are drown'd in Idolatry and Error, that he wou'd ſhew them the like Mercy, in bringing them to the Light of his ſaving Truths: Pray for thy Self and Friends, and let not the depth of Iniquity or preſent Obſtinacy put thee into Deſpair; for thou ſeeſt here the Effect of the Divine Power and Mercy, which can eaſily draw Light out of Darkneſs, and of *Babylon* make a Holy *Jeruſalem*.

It being likewiſe the Day of St. Priſca, An. 269.

Who at the Age of Thirteen, under *Claudius* ſuffer'd all the Extremities of Priſons and Racks, the Fury of Wild Beaſts, and Cruelty of the Sword, rather than Worſhip Idols, and Deny her Faith; Pray for the Divine Aſſiſtance on all thoſe, who are Suffering under any Affliction, but eſpecially for their

their Faith: Let those Tender Years encourage thee to place thy Confidence in God, how great soever thy own Weakness be: Pray for all of both Sexes in that dangerous and unsettled Age, that God would give them a true Sense of their Duty, secure them against all Snares, and prepare them for Suffering rather than any ways Offend their God.

SS. *Marius*, *Martha*, *Audifax*, and *Abachus*, An. 269. *Jan.* 19.

Heb. 10 32, 38. *Mat.* 24. 3, 13.

1. FAther, Mother, and two Sons, *Persians*, who under *Claudius* came to *Rome*, to Visit the Sepulchers of the Martyrs, and being there wholly employ'd in relieving the Suffering Christians, were seiz'd by the Government, and after Variety of Torments, all put to Death: Pray for that Vast Empire of *Persia*, that God would Visit it with his Heavenly Light, and call it to his Faith: Pray for all Parents, that they may give good Example, and for all Children, that they may follow it.

it. Happy those Parents, who at the last Day shall meet their Children at the Right Hand of the Judge, thro' the Help of their good Education: Unhappy they, who shall meet theirs amongst the Damn'd, and see this the Consequence of their ill Example or Neglect.

It being likewise the Day of S. Canutus, An. 1081.

Heb. 10. 32, 38. *Mat.* 16. 24, 27.

King of the *Danes*, who, under the Distractions of a Crown, having applied himself to the gaining a better Kingdom, in the Constant Practice of Mortification, Prayer, and a wonderful Charity; and by his Zeal for the Law of God drawn upon himself the Hatred of Wicked Men, was by their Malice Murther'd in the Church before the Altar, Praying for his Enemies: Pray for thy King, that God would be the Protecter of his Anointed, and give him a true Zeal for his Laws, whose Vicegerent he is: Pray, that God would defend him against all the Malicious Designs of Ill Subjects and Foreign Enemies. Pray for thy self,

ſelf, that no Pretext of Solicitude or Worldly Care may hinder thee from thoſe Duties, which are neceſſary for thy Eternal Good: Worldly Souls are very Ingenious in finding Reaſons to Neglect God and make themſelves Miſerable: God may be ſerv'd in all States.

It being alſo the Day of S. Wulſtan, An. 1095.

Biſhop of *Worceſter*, Pray for the Biſhops and Paſtors of this Nation, that they may anſwer all the Duties of their Charge, and be ſo many Lights to Eternity.

SS. *Fabian*, An. 253. and *Sebaſtian*, An. 301. *January* 20.

Heb. 11. 33, 39. *Luk.* 6. 17, 23.

1. THE Former was Biſhop of *Rome*, put to Death under the Emperor *Decius*: Pray for the preſent Biſhop of that See, that in Piety and Zeal for his Flock, he may imitate his Holy Predeceſſors: Pray for thy ſelf,

ſelf, that in all Afflictions, thou may'ſt ſuffer with the Meekneſs, Submiſſion and Patience of the Martyrs.

2. The Latter was Chief Commander under *Dioclesian*, who for Encouraging and Aſſiſting the Perſecuted Chriſtians, was by his Order firſt Bound to a Tree and Shot with Arrows, and then Scourg'd to Death: Pray for this Spirit of Charity, that in thy Circumſtances, thou may'ſt be ever ready to Counſel, Comfort and give Relief to thoſe that are in Diſtreſs, 'tis the moſt Effectual Means of drawing down the Divine Aſſiſtance for thy Help in thy Temporal and Spiritual Wants: For thy Charity to others opens God's Hands to thee. Pray for all Soldiers, that while they Venture their Lives at ſo Cheap a Rate, they may be better prepar'd for Death, than too generally they are: That Univerſal Corruption, which is amongſt them, calls for thy moſt Fervent Prayers: Pray for their Commanders, that they may keep up Chriſtian as well as Military Diſciplin.

S

St. *Agnes*, An. 303. *January* 21.

Eccles. 57. 1, 12. *Mat.* 25. 1, 13.

1. A *Roman* Virgin, who at the Age of Thirteen, having chosen Christ Jesus for her Spouse, continued Faithful to him amidst all the Solicitations and Attempts, that could possibly be made against her: Flatteries could not move her, nor Threats or Torments terrifie her; she had given her Heart to Christ, and was resolv'd that nothing of this World should take it from him: Her Constancy was first Tried by the Fire, from whence, like pure Gold, she came out without hurt, and afterwards by the Sword of the Executioner gave up her Soul, a Holy Victim, into the Hands of her Heavenly Spouse: Pray for this Spirit of the Love of God, that thou may'st sincerely give thy Heart to him, and be ever Faithful in what thou do'st: Be asham'd to be thus out-done by a Virgin of Thirteen Years, and that not having half the Trials she had, thou art so often overcome: For what are all thy Failings and Sins, but the Ef-

fect of thy Weakneſs, and Want of Reſolution? Thou pretendeſt to Love God, and yet upon every little Difficulty, or the Flattery of Creatures, ſurrender'ſt thy ſelf, and becom'ſt a Prey either to Impatience, Senſuality or Self-love. Humble thy ſelf at the ſight of thy Infirmities and Inconſtancy, lay a better Foundation, and beg for Strength of Spirit, even the Spirit of this Saint.

2. Lament the unhappy Education of both Sexes in theſe Tender Years, who are train'd up to an early Knowledge of the Follies and Vanities of this World; but are little acquainted with the Practice of a Chriſtian Life: Their Parents Concern is to fit them for this World, and how often do they expoſe them, for the gaining theſe Qualifications? Inſtead of Humility, they are inſtructed in Pride, and bred up to all thoſe Ways, which are capable of making them Value and be in Love with themſelves; inſtead of Meeekneſs, they are taught to be Imperious; inſtead of Forſaking, they are taught to Admire the World; inſtead of Self-denial, they are bred up in the Practice of Gratifying and Indulging themſelves; and thus inſtead of Loving

ing God, and being prepar'd to Sacrifice all to him, they fall a Sacrifice, first to Vanity and Self-love, and then too often to Vice; and this is the end of the Parents ill-manag'd and indiscreet Love, and of all their Expence. And how can it well be otherwise, when they attend so wholly to what a Corrupt World requires, and so very little to what the Gospel commands? They fit them more for Earth than Heaven, and what wonder is it they are so Earthly? They want not seeming Reasons to justifie their Method: But what Motives can be truly reasonable, on that side, when Salvation, Eternity, and the Gospel stand on the other? Pray therefore for all Parents, that their Care and Love for their Children may be more Substantial than too commonly it is; that Nature may not be their Rule but the Gospel; and that being Christians, they may not in this proceed like Heathens and Unbelievers; that, if they have Faith, they may give Proof of it in this Point.

SS. *Vincentius*, An. 301. and *Anaſtaſius*, An. 627. *Jan.* 22.

Wiſd. 3. 1, 8. *Luke.* 21. 9, 19.

1. THE former was a Deacon of *Spain*, who for Preaching the Goſpel in the time of *Diocleſian*, was Apprehended, and continuing Faithful under the Trial of Scourges, Racks, and Fire, and Variety of other Torments, gave up his Soul into the Hands of God. Pray for this Spirit of Patience and Courage under all Trials: There's no living in this World, but under ſome Perſecution or other: Relations, Neighbors, thy own Indiſcretion and Paſſions may be to thee a *Diocleſian*; if thou haſt not a Trial of thy Faith, thou haſt of thy Fidelity, at leaſt to thy God; and if thou couldſt but hold out with the Charity and Patience of the Martyrs, thou need'ſt not doubt of meeting with the Crown of Martyrs. Pray therefore that thou may'ſt be Juſt and Faithful in little occaſions; theſe preſent themſelves often, and thou art ſo often tried: If thou ſincerely Honor'ſt the Conſtancy

ſtancy of a Martyr on the Rack, be aſham'd of, and beg Pardon for thy ordinary Weakneſs, in ſo eaſily yielding, and being tried under thoſe petty Perſecutions, to which thou art call'd.

2. The other was a *Perſian* Monk, who after Cruel Torments, was put to Death, with Seventy other Chriſtians: Pray for the Empire of *Perſia*, that God would pleaſe to bring it to the Knowledge of his Truths: Pray for all under any Affliction whatever: Pray for all, who are in their Agony, or near Death, that God would Comfort and Support them with his Grace.

St. *Raimundus de Pennafort*, An. 1275. *January* 23.

Eccluſ 31. 8, 11. *Luke.* 12. 35, 40.

1. A *Dominican*, eminent in all Virtues, but particularly in his great Charity to the Poor and Diſtreſs'd: Pray for all the Religious of that Holy Order: Pray for this Spirit of Charity, that thou may'ſt not be wanting to whatever part of it falls within thy power, whether in Viſiting, Comfort-

ing or Relieving such as are in Distress: 'Tis the best Reparation thou canst make for thy past Hard-heartedness, for thy Idle Visits, for the Time and Money Mis-spent: 'Tis the surest Way of obtaining Mercy for thy self.

2. It was by his Means was founded the Religious Order for the Redemption of Captives: Pray for all those poor Souls, who are in Captivity amongst Infidels, that God would be their Comforter, and by his Grace supply all their Wants Spiritual and Temporal: They are thy Fellow-members, and therefore is this Compassion and Charity due to them: Pray likewise for all those unhappy Christians, who live Captives to Sin: Their Chains are strong, and require a very powerful Grace for their Deliverance: Bless God, if thou art none of these, and fail not daily to put up thy best Prayers in their behalf, who lye under this Misfortune.

It being also the Day of St. Emerentiana, An. 304.

A *Roman* Virgin, and Companion of S. *Agnes*, who for her Zeal against the Heathens, was Ston'd to Death before she

ſhe was Baptized: Pray for all under the Profeſſion of Virginity: Pray for all, who like Catechumens, are not yet receiv'd into the Church, that God would inſpire them with Courage and Patience anſwerable to their Circumſtances: Many have a proſpect of great Difficulties before them, whether from Parents, Friends, Dependance, *&c.* enough to terrifie ſuch as have but yet an Imperfect Senſe of their Obligation to Truth: Pray therefore for all theſe, for they ſtand in need of thy Charity.

St. *Timothy*, An. 104. *Jan* 24.

1. Tim. 6. 11, 16. Luke 14. 26, 33.

1. HE was Companion of St. *Paul*, and made by him Biſhop of *Epheſus*: Pray for all the Biſhops of Chriſt's Church, that as they receive their Charge by Succeſſion from the Apoſtles, ſo they may Faithfully accquit themſelves in every part with the Spirit of the Apoſtles: Pray for all thoſe, who are any ways wanting in their Duty.

2. He with great Zeal endeavor'd

to withdraw the People of *Ephesus* from their Abominable Idolatry in offering Sacrifices to *Diana*: But their Obstinate Blindness render'd his endeavors Fruitless, and they rewarded his Charity by Stoning him to Death: Pray to be deliver'd from all Obstinacy and Blindness; for these make the grossest Errors appear as reasonable as Truth, and there's nothing but the Light of Heaven, join'd with an Humble Spirit, can prevent or remedy this Evil: Pray therefore for both, that thou may'st never unhappily mistake the Charity of those, who would be thy best Friends. If thou canst not bear those, who put thee in Mind of thy Faults, remember these Evils are at the Bottom; 'tis something of the Spirit of the *Ephesians*, and that's not a Christian one: Pray for a better: And if thou feelest Resentments and Dislikes upon the Attempt of such a Charity, consider them well, and thou wilt see them to be a-kin to those Stones, which were thrown against S. *Timothy*, and 'tis for fear of these, very few have Courage enough to run the Hazard of them.

Conversion of St. *Paul*, An. 35. *January* 25.

Act. 9. 1, 22. *Mat.* 19. 27, 29.

1. THE Zeal of his Education had made him an Enemy and Persecutor of Christ, of his Apostles, and his Faith: Examin the grounds of thy present Zeal; 'tis to be suspected, if it has no other grounds than the Principles of Education, or the Conversation of others like thy self, and may be equally found in the Mahometan and Mistaken Christian, as in the True one. What if thou art satisfied in thy self, seem'st fully convinc'd, and hast no doubts? Can'st thou pretend to more of this, than thou see'st in *Saul*? And was not he, notwithstanding this, still in the wrong, and even then Persecuting Christ, when he judg'd himself doing Service to God in the discharge of his Conscience? Satisfaction therefore of Conscience and Interior Conviction, are only then sufficient, when they are built on the Surest and Best Foundation; search and examin seriously, if thine be so;

it was for want of this ſearch, *Saul* became a Perſecutor of Chriſt; and 'tis only by this thou canſt prevent thy joining with him.

2. Being in the Heat of Zeal on his Way to *Damaſcus*, Chriſt call'd upon him: *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* Upon which, by the effect of the Divine Grace, being interiorly chang'd, he immediately anſwer'd; *Lord, what wilt thou have me do?* Beſeech Almighty God, to ſhew a like Mercy to all thoſe, who are out of the Way, whether miſled by Error or ſeduc'd by Vice; that that he would pleaſe effectually to touch their Hearts, and by his Heavenly Light, remove their Blindneſs and cure their Weakneſs. Thou canſt deſpair of none, when thou ſee'ſt here the Wolf chang'd into a Lamb. The greateſt Mercies are ſometimes reſerv'd for thoſe, who ſeem abandon'd to the greateſt Crimes: Let not therefore thy Anger, but thy Charity be mov'd, and pray for them. Pray likewiſe for thy ſelf; who knows, but on this Day of Mercy, thou may'ſt find Mercy? Raiſe up therefore thy Confidence in God, beſeech him to ſend forth his Light into thy Heart, and make thee ſenſible of all thy Evils: Open thy

Heart

Heart to his Voice, who calls thee to Repentance, and with *Paul* prostrate thy self on the ground, and with the desire of a Sincere Conversion cry out, Lord, what wilt thou have me do? O God, let this be the happy Hour, wherein I may wholly renounce my own Will, and only follow thine: I have gone from thee by Self-love and Pride, and I cannot return, but by Self-denial and Humility.

3. He was Three Days without Eating or Drinking: This Reconciliation of S. *Paul* was wholly Miraculous, and yet see, there's nothing done hastily in it by the best Director and Physician of Souls. These Three Days of Rigorous Fasting and Prayer in a State of Blindness, of Humiliation, and of Penance, teaches thee, what thou oughtest to do in thy return to God: Thou art to allow thy Soul time, wherein to make it sensible of its Sins, and earnestly to solicit for the Spirit of Contrition and Penance; and thou art to begin at least to punish thy Sins, and in Self-denials endeavor to make some Satisfaction to the Justice of God, before thou art truly reconcil'd with him. Adore this Conduct of God, and Pray, that it may be ever thy Rule;

for

for thou canst not have a better Guide, nor elsewhere take truer Measures for making thy Peace with Heaven. First endeavor, by a Serious Examination, to know thy Sins; but then, before thou go'st to thy Director, allow some time for Humiliation, for Penance and Contrition: This is staying with S. *Paul* in *Damascus*, before thou go'st to *Ananias*.

4. He Preach'd Jesus in the Synagogues, asserting him to be the Son of God: The best Proof of a true Conversion: His Sin was Disbelieving in Christ, Persecuting his Church, and Thirsting after the Blood of the Faithful; and now immediately upon his Conversion, he Preaches Jesus openly in the Synagogues, Labors to Establish his Church, Confirms the Faithful, and exposes himself to Dangers and Torments for that Faith which he had Persecuted; thus he Manifests the New Spirit he had receiv'd: Pray for the Grace of God, that this may be thy Method, as often as thou pretendest to Repent: Trust not to good Purposes, depend not on thy Confessions; let neither Tears or any sensible Grief for past Sins deceive thee, but see, whether thy Life be Chang'd; by this Test thou

thou may'ſt beſt judge of the Sincerity of all that went before: For if thou go'ſt on in thy former Ways, where is thy Converſion? If no Converſion, what then was thy Repentance, but Falſe and Deceitful? Beg Pardon for thy paſt Inſincerity, and Pray now, that the Converſion of St. *Paul* may be even the Model of thine.

St. *Polycarp*, An. 168. *Jan* 26.

1 *Joh.* 3. 10, 16. *Mat.* 10. 26, 33.

1. HE was Diſciple of S. *John Evangeliſt*, and by him ordain'd Biſhop of *Smyrna*: Pray for all the Biſhops of God's Church, that they may be True Followers of their Primitive Predeceſſors: Pray for the People of *Smyrna*, and of all *Aſia*, who having rejected the Doctrine of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, are now the Diſciples of *Mahomet*: Lament their Miſery and Blindneſs; acknowledge it the effect of the Divine Juſtice, in Puniſhment of their Wickedneſs: Offer up thy Prayers in behalf of this Nation, and beſeech Almighty God, that by turning from its Evil

Evil Ways, it may prevent the like Judgment: Repent of thy own Sins, that thou may'ſt have no part in drawing any Public Calamity upon it.

2 Having diſcharg'd the Duty of a Good Shepherd, he was apprehended, in his Old Age, by the Heathens, and condemn'd to the Fire, in which, in the midſt of the Theatre, Crowded with an Inſulting Multitude, he offer'd himſelf a grateful Sacrifice to God: Pray for all thoſe, who are expos'd to difficulties, and any ways ſuffer on the account of their Faith. Be not Angry at the Reproaches of Inſulting Adverſaries; have Compaſſion on their Blindneſs, and bear with them, for ſuch Patience has the Promiſe of a Crown. Offer thy ſelf to ſuffer whatever Almighty God ſhall ordain for thee: Be aſham'd to ſink under Ordinary Troubles; theſe are but the Trials of thy Fidelity; they are to make thee ſenſible of thy own Weakneſs, and of thy neceſſary Dependance on God: And as for Extraordinary ones; if thou canſt not find Remedy, offer thy ſelf to them as to the Fire, which is to conſummate the Sacrifice, thou haſt made of thy ſelf to God.

St. *John*

St. *John Chrysostome*, An. 407. *January* 27.

2. *Tim* 4. 1, 8. *Mat.* 5. 13, 19.

1. HE was Arch Bishop of *Constantinople*: Pray for all that numerous People of the East, formerly Christians, but now subject to the Yoak of the Turks. Bewail the Condition of that City, built by the First Christian Emperor, the Seat of many Holy Bishops, and of the Second General Council, *&c.* but now how Miserable, in being the Scourge and Terror of *Christendom!* Fear God's Judgments, and confess them to be Just: Labor to prevent them by a Holy Life: The Fate of that City is the Fate of many Nations, of Families, and of Private Persons; and the Root of all, is the Contempt of the Divine Mercies, a Neglect of Christian Duties, and the Living a Heathenish Life under the Christian Profession: It is thus our Forefathers have drawn heavy Judgments on their Children to many Generations, and God has forsaken them, even as he did the *Jews*, because they

were

were not found Worthy. O God, how many Nations and Families, by their Corruptions, wicked Diſorders, and ungratefully Forgetting Thee, are now filling up the Number of their Sins, and Arming thy Juſtice againſt them! By their Infidelity they are making Way for Heatheniſm, and not only render themſelves Miſerable, but are in a Way of Cutting off from their Succeſſors and Children all the Means of Salvation, it may be, for ever. Viſit theſe Blind Souls, O God, not in thy Anger, but in Mercy, and powerfully awaken them, that they may be ſenſible of their Condition, and by yet ſeaſonable Means, prevent that Eternal Ruin, which threatens them and theirs. And thou, O Chriſtian, examin into thy Ways, and ſee what is the Method of thy Life, whether by thy Exemplary Piety, thou art ſoliciting for Mercy, or by thy Vicious Liberties, drawing down Judgments on thy Self, Family and Nation.

2. He appli'd, himſelf, by Preaching and other Zealous endeavors, to reprehend and reform the great Corruptions and Abuſes he obſerv'd amongſt his Flock, inveighing againſt the Scandalous Lives of the Nobility, and not

ſparing

ſparing the Injuſtice of the Empreſs her ſelf. Pray, that this Spirit may deſcend upon all the Prelates and Paſtors of Chriſt's Church, that they may Diſcountenance and make War againſt all Vice and Injuſtice; that no Human Conſideration of Favor, Intereſt, Party or Dependance may awe them into a Treacherous Silence, and make them Betray the Goſpel by Flattery or Compliance. He that connives at Diſorders for fear of being a loſer, by endeavoring to reform them, is not a Paſtor, but a Hireling, has not an Apoſtolical, but a Mercenary Spirit. And what are they, who are daily Witneſſes of Intemperance, Luxury and Prophaneneſs? Will not their Silence draw upon them the Guilt of Encouragers and Abetters? Pray for Remedy againſt theſe Evils.

3. By this his Zeal againſt Vice and Injuſtice S. *Chryſoſtom* rais'd many Enemies, not only of the Nobility and Empreſs, but alſo of the Clergy, by whoſe Wicked Calumnies and Contrivance, many Biſhops, and amongſt them, even S. *Epiphanius* and S. *Cyril* of *Alexandria*, with many Religious Ermits, were drawn in to eſpouſe the Cauſe againſt him, and become his Perſecutors; by whom

whom joining with the Empreſs, he was forc'd Twice into Baniſhment, in which after long Suffering he Died. Pray for Conſtancy and Courage in the diſcharge of thy Duty, whatever it be; ſuffer all Oppoſition with Patience, remembring that Charity and Juſtice have their Martyrs as well as the Creed. Wonder not, if thou find'ſt Men of Piety engag'd againſt thee; the moſt Holy are ſometimes moſt ſubject to be impos'd on; and in their Oppoſition is the greateſt Trial. Be Jealous of all Accuſations; Calumnies are often dreſs'd up with the Sincerity and Face of Truth, and by being too Credulous, thou may'ſt eaſily be drawn in to Perſecute a Saint. How many Reports haſt thou helpt to ſpread of this kind, by Means of which, Innocence and Truth have been great Sufferers? There may appear ſufficient Motives for the preſent; but haſt not thou had ſufficient Experience of thy own Weakneſs and others Malice, to Diſtruſt of all theſe, and ſuſpend thy Belief till better Information? In all theſe Circumſtances thou ſtandeſt in need of the Spirit of Diſcretion, and of the Light of Heaven to direct thee; pray for this earneſtly, that

that by an over-hasty Credulity thou may'st be Injurious to none.

S *Agnes*, *January* 28.

2 *Cor.* 10. 1,, and 11. 2. *Mat.* 13. 44, 52.

1. St. *Agnes*, some Days after her Martyrdom, appearing to her Parents, requir'd them not to Lament for the Loss of her, but rather to rejoice in her Happiness: Pray thou for those Excellent Dispositions of Soul, by which she was rais'd to that unchangeable State: Pray for Patience and Constancy in all Sufferings: Pray for the Love of God, by which she was above all Flatteries and Threats: Pray for a Resolution like hers, that thou may'st rather chuse the Extremity of Misery here, than Offend thy God; this is the most assured Proof, that thou lov'st him. Consider thy daily Impatience, in being so easily and often disturb'd: Reflect on thy Love of Vanity and of this World: See, how often thou chusest to expose thy self to Dangers, and even to Sin, rather than

than deny thy self, or the unreasonable desires of others, and thou wilt soon discover, thou hast a great deal to bewail in thy self of Infirmity and Sin, and has much to Pray for, this Day of Heavenly Strength, for thy Future Security: For thou must have the Holy Dispositions of this Saint, if thou design'st to follow her.

Remember likewise, if it be thy Petition to have those taken from thee by Death, whose Innocence or Virtue gives thee Security or grounded Hopes of their being Happy; 'tis not then thy part to give way to Grief, like Unbelievers, but rather to give Thanks to God for his Mercy, and rejoice in their Happiness. Something, 'tis true, must be allow'd to Nature, which cannot part with that, without Grieving, which it possess'd with Joy: But 'tis a Weakness still, and therefore, tho' in its first Surprize, it may be in some kind Innocent; yet affectedly to indulge it, and let it arise to any degree of Excess, cannot be without Sin: It being first against Reason, to grieve at their being Happy, whom we pretend to Love, and then an Implicit Rebellion against God, in Disapproving and Grieving at what he has done. Thou pray'st

pray'ſt daily, that his Will be done; and when 'tis done, thou grieveſt: Is not this Revoking and Contradicting all thy Prayers.

St. *Francis Sales*, An. 1623. *January* 29.

Eccluſ. 44. and 45. *Mat.* 25. 14, 23.

1. HE was Biſhop of *Geneva*, and ſpent his Life in looking for the Loſt Sheep: In this, his Zeal was ſo great, that no ſort of Difficulties or Dangers were ſufficient to diſcourage him; he conſider'd not himſelf, but only the Miſery of thoſe ſeduc'd Souls, who ſtood in need of his Help; and God bleſs'd his endeavors with the Converſion of many Thouſands. Pray for all the Biſhops of Chriſt's Church, that they may be Animated with the Spirit and Zeal of this Holy Prelate; that duly attending to all the Neceſſities of their Charge, neither Errors or Vice may have the Opportunity of ſpreading thro' their Neglect. Pray for the People of *Geneva*, that being deliver'd from all their Errors, they may

may become Faithful Professors of the Truth: Let this Charity of their Prelate have Place in thy Devotion

2. Notwithstanding the Immense Charity and Apostolical Labors of this Holy Pastor, he could not escape the Tongues of Men, who represented him under very Ill Characters at the Court of *Rome*, *France* and *Savoy*, and traduc'd his Books as Erroneous and Heretical. But none of these Calumnies made Impression on his Spirit, or discourag'd him in the Faithful discharge of his Duty. Pray for his Spirit of Meekness and Constancy, and let his Example Convince thee, that neither Fidelity or Innocence can secure thee against Calumnies and Scandals: And when these come to thy Portion, follow his Advice, in doing Right to Truth by justifying thy self, and to Humility by submitting to those Trials, which God shall permit for thy Exercise. Be ever Faithful to thy Duty, and Discreet in thy Conduct, and then, however Folly or Malice may Murmur against thee, go on with Courage, having God for thy Witness, and the Testimony of a good Conscience to Comfort thee.

3. His Charity still lives and brings forth

forth Fruit in those Holy Books, which he Writ, and in that Holy Order of the *Visitation*, which he instituted: Be Constant in daily Reading some part of his Books; Pray and Endeavor, that they may lead thee to a Devout Life, and encrease in thee the Love of God: Resolve not only to Read, but Practice also, and never be tir'd, till his Directions become thy Rule, and all thy Disorders and Passions give way to his Spirit: Pray for all the Religious of the *Visitation*, that they may faithfully answer the Designs of their Founder, and in their Lives give Proof of his Spirit.

St. *Martina*, An. 229. *Jan.* 30.

Ecclus 51. 1, 12. *Mat.* 25. 1, 13.

A *Roman* Virgin, who in the Third Century, under *Alexander* the Emperor, refusing to Sacrifice to Idols, had her Constancy tried with Scourges, Racks, Boiling Oyl, Wild Beasts, and the Fire; but being miraculously preserv'd, she finish'd at length a Glorious Martyrdom by the Sword:

Pray

Pray for a like Constancy under all Trials; there's no such Peace in this World, which is not mixt with Persecution, and the bearing it with Humility, Courage and Patience, is the Trial of thy Fidelity. In the Passion of Men thou meetest with something of the Wild Beast; in the Difficulties and Misfortunes of this World, thou hast thy Scourge; in the Miscarriages of Children, and Evil Ways of those, thou art most concern'd in, how often meetest thou with a Rack? And what thou canst not prevent or remedy of these by Lawful Means, art not thou bound to bear with Patience? This is a Common Duty; pray then for thy self and all others in Affliction, and endeavour to be Faithful.

2. Whilst thou Honorest the Happy End of this Martyr, pray for a happy Death for thy self; Death is a Violence to Nature, and Embracing this Violence with Patience and Submission to the Hand of God, is a kind of Martyrdom. Endeavor then to be Humble and Patient in all Pain and Sickness, and bow down with an Entire Submission under the Sentence, whatever it be, the Divine Justice shall pronounce against thee, and beg, that when Death comes

comes, thou may'ſt Surrender thy Soul with the Diſpoſitions of this Martyr.

St. *Peter Nolaſco*, An. 1256. *January* 31.

1 *Cor.* 4. 9, 14. *Luke.* 12. 32, 34.

1. A Faithful Servant of God eminent for his ſingular Charity to his Neighbor, and Founder of the Religious Order for the Redemption of Captives: Pray for this Spirit of Charity for the Aſſiſtance and Relief of thy Neighbor: Thou meeteſt daily many Objects, that deſerve thy Compaſſion, and demand thy Help: Conſider ſeriouſly the Neceſſities of thy Neighbors, both Spiritual and Temporal; if thou haſt Charity, thou wilt ſtudy their Relief, either by thy ſelf or others Thou haſt it often in thy Power to do Service to thy Neighbor; if thou omitteſt it, becauſe of the Trouble, Pains or Uneaſineſs it muſt give thee, it is not Charity, but Self-love, commands thy Heart.

2. Examin what thy Vocation is,

and see, whether thou livest by Oppressing thy Neighbor: There are too many Professions expos'd to this, of Men who set up for helping others, and so far are unmindful of Charity, as to take the Advantage of their Misfortunes, Lengthen their Miseries, and keep Open their Wounds, whilst they undertake to Heal them: Their only Concern is Gain, and they value not, how much their Neighbor Suffers, so they can be Gainers by it. This is an Order of Men quite Opposit to the Charity we Honor this Day, in this Holy Man: He gave away what he had for the Relief of his Neighbor in Misery; these, under the Color of relieving, add to their Neighbor's Misery, that they may be enrich'd by their Sufferings. If his was the Method of Charity, theirs is contrary to it; and if his was the Way of the Gospel and Salvation, how can theirs be so? Let then all those seriously examin their proceedings by this Test, who by Lending Money, Receiving Goods, Giving Advice, Managing their Business, or any other way pretend to Assist their Neighbor, in his Distress: For if there be Oppression in the Assistance they give, their Assistance is Cruelty, and

without

without a full Reſtitution, how can they have a ſhare in the Mercy of God?

3. Pray for all thoſe, who lye under any Oppreſſion, that God would be their Support and Deliverer: Pray for all, that are in Slavery amongſt Infidels, that God would be their Preſerver and Comforter: Pray for all thoſe unhappy Chriſtians, who are Slaves to their own Evil Paſſions, to Vice and Habitual Sin, that God would Awaken and Heal them; engage the Charity of this Saint to join with thee for the Relief of all.

4. It being likewiſe the laſt Day of the Month, fail not to give God Thanks for his Preſervation, and all his Bleſſings beſtow'd on thee and thine, and by hearty Contrition, beg Pardon for all thy Sins and Failings of this Month.

FEBRUARY.

St. *Ignatius*, An. 109. *Feb.* 1.

Rom. 8. 35, 39. *Jo.* 12. 24, 26.

1. HE was the Third Bishop of *Antioch*, after St. *Peter* and *Evodius*, governing that Church above Forty Years, with an Apostolic Zeal and Piety, which has render'd him eminent to all Succeeding Ages: Pray for all Bishops of Christ's Church, that his Spirit may be reviv'd in them: Pray for the People of that City and Dioceſs, now subject to the Tyranny and Errors of the *Turks*, that they may once more be the Object of his Mercy, and become his People again.

2. He was apprehended by Order of *Trajan* the Emperor, and by him sentenc'd to be carried to *Rome*, there to be devour'd by Lions in the Amphitheatre. He receiv'd his Sentence with Joy, having a long Time desir'd to Offer himself a Sacrifice to Christ. And being accordingly Shipp'd under the Custody of Ten Soldiers, whom he calls Leopards, he suffer'd very much by their

their Cruelty; but *their Iniquity*, says he, *was my Instruction.* O God, how far am I from the Humility and Patience of this thy Servant! I have hitherto regarded all manner of Suffering as my Misfortune, and have been so far from improving the Injuries done me, that they have been to me so many Provocations to Sin. Am not I then as far from the Primitive Virtue of thy Servants, as I am from their Times? Pardon, O God, this my Misery, and infuse into my Soul some Sparks of this Primitive Spirit; give me Grace to improve all Suffering into the occasion of Virtue, and that I may learn something of that Apostolic Lesson, in knowing what it is to rejoice in Suffering for thee.

3. The Spirit of this Holy Prelate, and the Earnest Desire he had of Suffering for Christ, is plainly discover'd in his Epistle writ to the *Romans*, which he sent before him, and is recorded by S. *Jerome*: I wish, says he, I may come to those Beasts, which are prepar'd for me; I hope they will be Ravenous to devour me; I will provoke them on their Prey, lest they should spare me, as they have done other Martyrs: And if they will not Seize me, I

will force them, I will put my ſelf upon them, that I may be devour'd. Pardon me, my Children, I know what Advantage it will be to me. 'Tis now I begin to be a Diſciple of Jeſus Chriſt; I deſire nothing upon Earth, that ſo I may find Chriſt. Let the Fire come, let the Croſs, and Beaſts, the Rack, and all the Torments the Devil can ſuggeſt, ſo that I may enjoy Chriſt. Hinder me not, my dear Brethren, from following my Lord; and if you have any Love for me, ſhew it not in endeavoring to ſave my Body, or in oppoſing the deſire I have to ſee my God. I ſay no more to you, but that I deſire to Die. Being now expos'd in the Theatre, and hearing the Lions Roar, he cried out; I am the Corn of Chriſt, let the Teeth of Lions grinde me, that I may become pure Bread fit to be offer'd to him. He was forthwith torn by the Lions, and his Relics were carried by his Diſciples to *Antioch*. Pray now for the Spirit of this Holy Man; Pray for that Love of God, which enflam'd his Breaſt; 'tis only this can make thee deſire to ſee him, and ſweeten all thoſe Sufferings, which may be the happy Means of bringing thee to him; and let the

Ordinary

Ordinary Troubles which fall to thy Lot, be a Trial, if thou haſt any degree of this Divine Love in thy Soul.

4. This being the Firſt Day of the Month, Offer thy ſelf to God, and beg his Aſſiſtance for this Month, for the Faithful Diſchaarge of thy Duty, and Amendment of all the Failings of the laſt. It being likewiſe a Faſt, in preparation for the following Feſtival, be not wanting to this Obligation, but by Self-denial and Recollection prepare for an encreaſe of Grace.

The *Purification*, or *Candlemaſs-Day*, *February* 2.

Mal. 3. 1, 4. *Luke* 2. 22, 32.

1. PRay for the Humility of the B. Virgin, who being Exempt from the Law of Purification, notwithſtanding ſubmitted to it. Learn by her Example, not to Value the Opinions of Men: Diſcharge thou thy Duty, and leave the World to ſay what it will.

2. Whilſt the B. Virgin offers, this Day, her Son to God, offer thou thy Self (and Children) with him; beg-

ing his Bleſſing on thy ſelf and them.

3. Deſire to receive Chriſt into thy Heart, with the Faith and Zeal of Old *Simeon*; and beg that, like him, thy Soul may no more long after Earthly Goods, but the Eternal Poſſeſſion of thy God.

4. If thou receiveſt a bleſt Candle this Day, take it as the Emblem of Chriſt, confeſſing him to be the Light of the World, and begging he will be ever a Light to thee, to Conduct thee ſafe thro' the Darkneſs and Dangers of this Life.

It was an Act of Extraordinary Humility and Obedience in the B. Virgin to go to the Temple to be Purified, who being Priviledg'd with that Divinity of Mother and Virgin, was not at all concern'd in that Law; but She choſe rather to ſatisfie it, than plead her juſt Exemption; to teach us the Love and Practice of thoſe Virtues, which we honor in her this Day. It were therefore to be wiſh'd, we could learn what She teaches, and heartily Labor in our own Purification, while we Celebrate hers. She, full of Grace, and therefore Holy and Spotleſs, goes to the Temple, under the repute of a Le-

gal

gal Impurity; and we go to the Temple defil'd with Sin, and yet hating the Thoughts of being esteem'd so Is it therefore she wants to be purified or we? Have we not then Reason to study her Humility and Obedience, that so what were her Ornaments, may become our Remedy? Humble therefore thy self, Dear Christian, this Day, under the Sight of thy Numberless Sins, of thy Manifold Impurities and Corruptions, and resolve on a Universal Compliance with the Law of God, without consulting thy Ease with pretended Exemptions; for thus only canst thou make it a happy Festival of Purification to thy Soul.

See then, whether thou hast a Humility, which any ways resembles hers: Whether thou regardest not the Opinion of Men, but placest thy whole Comfort in the Testimony of a Good Conscience; it would be happy, could thy Conscience answer favorably to this: But how can this be, when Pride has the general direction of all thou do'st; not only in raising thy Passions, but even laying them again; and there's scarce one Point, wherein thou seem'st to seek God, to Discharge thy Duty, or even Humble thy self be-

ing his Bleſſing on thy ſelf and them.

3. Deſire to receive Chriſt into thy Heart, with the Faith and Zeal of Old *Simeon*; and beg that, like him, thy Soul may no more long after Earthly Goods, but the Eternal Poſſeſſion of thy God.

4. If thou receiveſt a bleſt Candle this Day, take it as the Emblem of Chriſt, confeſſing him to be the Light of the World, and begging he will be ever a Light to thee, to Conduct thee ſafe thro' the Darkneſs and Dangers of this Life.

It was an Act of Extraordinary Humility and Obedience in the B. Virgin to go to the Temple to be Purified, who being Priviledg'd with that Divinity of Mother and Virgin, was not at all concern'd in that Law; but She choſe rather to ſatisfie it, than plead her juſt Exemption; to teach us the Love and Practice of thoſe Virtues, which we honor in her this Day. It were therefore to be wiſh'd, we could learn what She teaches, and heartily Labor in our own Purification, while we Celebrate hers. She, full of Grace, and therefore Holy and Spotleſs, goes to the Temple, under the repute of a Legal

gal Impurity; and we go to the Temple defil'd with Sin, and yet hating the Thoughts of being esteem'd so Is it therefore she wants to be purified or we? Have we not then Reason to study her Humility and Obedience, that so what were her Ornaments, may become our Remedy? Humble therefore thy self, Dear Christian, this Day, under the Sight of thy Numberless Sins, of thy Manifold Impurities and Corruptions, and resolve on a Universal Compliance with the Law of God, without consulting thy Ease with pretended Exemptions; for thus only canst thou make it a happy Festival of Purification to thy Soul.

See then, whether thou hast a Humility, which any ways resembles hers: Whether thou regardest not the Opinion of Men, but placest thy whole Comfort in the Testimony of a Good Conscience; it wou'd be happy, could thy Conscience answer favorably to this: But how can this be, when Pride has the general direction of all thou do'st; not only in raising thy Passions, but even laying them again; and there's scarce one Point, wherein thou seem'st to seek God, to Discharge thy Duty, or even Humble thy self be-

fore God or Men, but Pride ſtill has an Influence on thy beſt Actions, and the Management of thy Humility it ſelf? 'Tis Pride makes thee reſent Injuries, and excites thy Paſſions in thy own Defence: And when thou apprehendeſt theſe Paſſions will diminiſh thy eſteem with Men, the ſame Pride, which rais'd them, ſoon calms all again? And afterwards when thou uſeſt Violence to Nature, ſuppreſſing that fierceneſs, to which thy Temper leads thee, is it not the deſire of being thought Humble, has a great Hand in all theſe Self-denials? Pride again ſpurs thee on to complain of whatever thou ſuffer'ſt, and the ſame, at other times enjoins thee Silence, that thou may'ſt gain the Character of Patient. There's Pride in taking Place of others, and very often as great Pride in giving it. There's Pride in pleaſing thy ſelf with others Praiſes, and as great Pride in ſeeming diſpleas'd at them: There's Pride in Vain Attire, and no leſs ſometimes in a Plainer Dreſs, and under Patches: There's Pride in being employ'd in Office or at Court, and very eaſily a much greater Pride, in refuſing all ſuch Dignities: There's Pride in Vice, and Virtue is but too often

the

the occasion of it: In fine, thou canst not instance any one Particular, but what is either wholly vitiated with this insinuating Evil, or at least has a Tincture of it. The Desire of being well thought on and admir'd creeps into every Action; thou canst not do any thing, but there's still a comparing thy self with others, and this is almost inseparable from an undue valuing thy self, and a contempt of them: Thou canst not look up to Heaven, but thou hast an Eye still upon Men; and thy Heart is ever divided betwixt what thou do'st, and what others will think, of thee. Thus hast thou Reason to apprehend thy Life to be made up of a great Variety of Pride; and that, even whilst thou designedly opposest it, it never quits thee, but only shifts its Post.

Consider next, what thy Obedience is, and see, how near it comes to what thou seem'st to Honor in the Blessed Virgin: Thou pretend'st to keep the Laws of God and of the Church; but how many Pretexts are found to dispence with thy Compliance? How far art thou wanting in the Precept of Charity to thy Neighbor, by pretending Reasons to keep at a distance from him, to omit all usual Testimonies of Respect,

Respect, to Diminish his Reputation with others, and even entertain a Bitterness in thy Heart against him? How do'st thou offend against Justice, in deceiving and over-reaching thy Neighbor, in refusing or delaying the Payment of just Debts? How many Pretexts hast thou to Transgress the Bounds of Truth, Temperance and Modesty, and Neglect all the Rules of Order and Discipline which belong to thy Charge and Family? How easily dost thou dispence with the Duties of [illegible] Holidays and Fasting? How many shifts for putting by thy Prayers, neglecting the Sacraments, and omiting many other Obligations which God and a Sincere Conscience exact from thee? Is it not a Confusion to thee, to Reflect how much Self-love, Interest, and other Human Respects, prevail on thee, to Smother all thy Reasons, that press thee to thy Duty? Consider it well, and see, whether in pretending to Celebrate the Purification of the Virgin *Mary*, thou hast not sufficient Motives to oblige thee to undertake thy own. Thou here observest, how much thou wantest of those Holy Dispositions, which brought the B Virgin, this Day, to the Temple: And tho' thou

thou canst never hope to obtain either Humility or Obedience to equal hers; yet the great distance, that is betwixt thee and her, gives scope to thy Endeavors, to advance many degrees beyond what thou at present art. If it be not in thy Power entirely to Root out that Pride, which is within thee, yet thou may'st Cut off many of its Branches; thou may'st Crush its Fruit in the Bud, and prevent its coming to Maturity: If thou canst not altogether hinder its Subtil Insinuations, yet at their first Appearance, thou mayst renounce them, and level all thy Proceedings at a better Mark, than the gaining the esteem of Men. And as for those Rebellious Inclinations against God and his Law, which thou bringest into the World, can'st thou not suppress them more than hitherto thou hast done? May'st thou not proceed with greater Sincereity in all thy Actions, and not be so easie in admitting groundless Pretexts to excuse thee from thy Duty? Canst thou not be more Faithful in what God and thy State require, without being aw'd by what the World will say, or flatter'd by Sloth and Self-love, into Neglect, Omissions and Disobedience? In these particu-

particulars thou haſt a Large Field open before thee, wherein to Work conſiderably upon thy ſelf, and make ſome Progreſs towards that Purification, without which thou can'ſt have no Advantage in this Days Solemnity.

But in this thou canſt not poſſibly make any advance, but by taking Chriſt for thy Light, who is this Day declar'd to be the Light of the *Gentiles*. If thou follow'ſt him, he will be a Light to thy Feet, and Conduct thee into the Ways of True Humility and Obedience, who, in Submiſſion to his Father's Will, humbled himſelf even to the Death of the Croſs: By his Help thou wilt ſoon diſcover all the Frauds of thy Treacherous Nature, thou wilt learn to unmask all thoſe vain Pretexts, by which thou art ſo often miſled, and plainly diſtinguiſhed betwixt the Diſpenſations of Self-love and Corrupt Practice, and the Commands of God. 'Tis for want of this Light thou ſo often go'ſt out of the Way, whilſt as in the Abſence of the Sun thou ſetteſt up other Lights in his place; ſo in not having the Light of Chriſt and his Juſtice to direct thee, thou ſubſtituteſt in his place a Falſe Light, and a Falſe Juſtice, to be thy Guide: And to how many

many unavoidable Dangers must thou be then expos'd, when the Way, thou art oblig'd to walk in, is so very Narrow, and attended with Precipices on every side? How canst thou here possibly go on with any safety, when thou hast nothing before thee, but False Lights, which Confound the Sight, and often Blind thy Eyes? This is the true occasion of all the Errors, Injustices and Wickedness in the World. Men go on in the most unwarrantable Ways, and they all have their Reasons, which give them a sort of Assurance and Satisfaction, in what they do; they have a kind of Light which ever accompanies them, but they are not Sincere in examining, what Light it is. They are not Solicitous to take Christ with them, and then the Enemy is ready enough to offer them False Lights in his Place; and their Deceitful Nature is too ready in accepting them, because these lead to what pleases; hence many taking but one False Step in the Beginning, it is often follow'd with most Destructive Consequences, which are almost Irrecoverable: And hence we see a World almost entirely Corrupt, and even great Numbers of those, who pretend to Salvation, living in the

Practice

Practice of daily Frauds, Injuſtice and Oppreſſions, in moſt Notorious Diſorders of Prodigality, Pride, Self-love and Intemperance, *&c.* and yet all generally perſwading themſelves, that things are well enough; and thus Blind and Deluded they go on, till the enterance into Eternity opens their Eyes. And how wilt thou eſcape this Misfortune, being equally ſubject to the ſame Miſery with others, of deceiving thy ſelf? Thou haſt no other means to prevent it, but by making choice of that Divine Light which is this Day offer'd thee, even Chriſt himſelf. Beg therefore earneſtly, that he will ever be a Light to thee; commit thy ſelf to his Conduct; have a great Confidence in his Aſſiſtance; begin nothing without him; ſubmit with Humility and Obedience to all the Ways of his Commands and Providence, and be ever on the watch, that no Conſideration of thy ſelf or the World draw the out of this Way.

St. *Blaſ-*

St. *Blasius*, *February* 3.

2 *Cor.* 1. 3, 7. *Mat.* 16. 24, 27.

1. HE was Bishop of *Sebaste* in *Armenia* in the Primitive Times, when Prelacy was the Recompence of Virtue, and almost a certain Way to Martyrdom: The Business of his Life was the Care of his Flock, in which he Labor'd with a wonderful Zeal, for the discharging his own Conscience, and supporting theirs amidst the Dangers of those difficult Times: Pray, that this may be the Spirit of all the Prelates and Pastors in Christ's Church, and make thy Address to God in behalf of that People, who having preserv'd Christianity, are yet unhappily divided from the Church. Pray for Union and Peace amongst Christians, that all Schisms being heal'd, they may be all of one Spirit and one Mind.

2. The Persecution being very Severe, tho' he earnestly desir'd to suffer for Christ, yet he retir'd into a Cave, that in that shelter he might be capable of giving some Assistance to his People: Where being discover'd, he

was

was seiz'd by *Agricolaus* President under *Diocletian*, and after many Torments, put to Death by the Sword. Pray for Patience under all Trials, both for thy self and others: Pray that thou may'st learn the true Practice of retiring in time of Persecution and Danger; and remember the Persecution of Friends is many times much greater than that of Enemies; and that thou art oftner in danger from Flattery than the Sword; and while the one threatens thy Body, and the other thy Soul, consider whether in this there be not the greater Obligation of withdrawing: Pray then for this Grace, that thou may'st be ever upon the watch, in observing the many Snares and Occasions of Sin, into which thy most Familiar Acquaintance draw thee. Happy thou, if thou chuse'st rather to lye hid, than expose thy self to danger: in this thou may'st disoblige Friends, and provoke their Railery; but thou wilt most certainly please thy God, and draw down plenty of Heavenly Blessings on thy Head; and is not this the more Christian part?

St. *Andrew Corsinus*, *Feb.* 4.

Eccles 44. and 45. *Mat.* 25. 14, 23.

1. IN his Youthful Years, notwithstanding a Pious Education under his Parents Care, he ran into great disorders, and, like *Samuel*'s Sons, had no regard to the good Example and Instruction, that had been given him. 'Tis what all Parents ought to remember, that tho' giving good Education be their Duty, and the most assured Way to a Virtuous Life; yet 'tis no Security against Vice; but then there is this Comfort still, that their Childrens Sins are none of theirs, in not being occasion'd thro' their Fault: Whereas those Parents, who have been wanting in this Duty, cannot see their Children unhappy, but they must condemn themselves; and having Reason to fear all this Misforune to be the Consequence of their Neglect, they cannot reckon themselves Innocent, as long as they see them Guilty; nor can they find any true Peace of Mind, till by Prayers, and Tears, and untir'd Endeavors, they have either perswaded them

them to reform, or at least done so much on their parts, that they may Hope, God will accept it in Expiation of their former Neglect. All Parents Care being so very great, Pray for them, that they may faithfully discharge their Duty: Pray for their Comfort, who having comply'd with this Obligation, have notwithstanding the Affliction of Extravagant Children: Pray for all Young People of both Sexes, that they may not be deluded with Follies and Vanities, and for the reclaiming all such, who are unhappily engag'd in Sin.

2. God having afterwards touch'd his Heart, he renounc'd all his former Ways, and entering into a Religious State, became an Example of great Piety; and after some Years, was chosen Bishop of *Fesulæ*; in which Charge he with great Solicitude, labor'd to satisfie all its Obligations, and by a Life of Extraordinary Charity and Mortification, gave Encouragement to all Virtues. *An.* 1373. Let no Sinners then be discourag'd, but raise their Hopes in God who offers his Grace to all, and upon Sincere Conversion, never fail to change Vessels of Weakness into Vessels of Honor: He has Mercy to forgive the greate

greatest Offences, and no Crime is so provoking as a distrust of his Goodness: Make then an Act of Hope for thy self, with an Intire Confidence in thy God; and Pray for all those Dejected Souls, whose Immoderate Fears keep them at a distance from him 'Tis a good Fear, which makes us Humble, and more Fervent in Prayer, upon the Knowledge of our Infirmity and Unworthiness; but this Fear is abus'd, when running to an Excess, it discourages us in our Duty, and hinders us from making any Progress. Pray for all, that are thus indiscreet, and for thy self resolve and take care, that thy Fear never extinguish thy Hope.

St. *Agatha*, *February* 5.

1 *Cor.* 1 26, 21. *Mat.* 19. 3, 12.

1. A Virgin of *Sicily*, who being Solicited by all Arts to comply with the Wicked Desires of the Governor, resolutely withstood them all, chusing rather the Humility and Contempt of the Gospel, than the great Offers of Honor and Riches, that were made

made her: Pray for all that are exposʼd to the like Temptations; great Grace is neceſſary to ſtand againſt them, thy Charity cannot be better employʼd than to beg in their behalf, who are under theſe Trials. Reſolve likewiſe for thy ſelf, and thoſe under thy Care, that Worldly Advantages ſhall never turn the Balance, in whatever choice thou art to make. 'Tis hence many Ruin themſelves and Children, whilſt conſidering only what is likely to make them Great or Rich, they have ſo little regard to what is to make them Good and Happy, that they greatly expoſe this to the hazard, ſo they can but ſecure the other. All theſe want the Faith of Eternal thoſe Goods, which directed this Holy Virgin in her choice; they want that Sincere Love of God, which movʼd her to run the Hazard of all that's Worldly, for the ſatisfying her Duty, and ſecuring God to her ſelf. Pray, thou may'ſt always do ſo.

2. *Agatha* being not to be wrought upon by Promiſes, ſhe is triʼd by Cruelty; ſhe is accusʼd of being a Chriſtian; and becauſe ſhe will not Worſhip and Sacrifice to Idols, is caſt into Priſon, put on the Rack, has her Breaſt Cut off, is Broilʼd on the Fire, and having gone

gone thro' all these Torments, at length giving up her Soul to God, finishes a happy Martyrdom, *An.* 252. Pray for this Constancy of Spirit under all Trials, be asham'd to be so much out-done by a Tender Virgin, and Pray for her Patience. Pray for all those, who wanting Courage, are ready to sink under the weight of their Troubles; Pray, that God would be their Support, and send them Comfort; that they may never lose their Hope in him. Pray for all those, who are now in their Agony, that they may Surrender their Souls to God with the Holy Dispositions of this Saint.

St. *Dorothy*, *February* 6.

Eccles 51. 13, 17. *Mat.* 13. 44, 52.

1. A Virgin of *Cæsarea*, who being apprehended under *Diocletian*, was deliver'd into the Hands of Two Sisters, who had forsaken the Faith of Christ, that, by their Example and Solicitations she might be likewise perswaded to renounce him: But her Virtue so far prevail'd on them, that they return'd

return'd to their Faith, and Dy'd Martyrs. Pray for all those, whose ill Circumstances put them in danger of being seduc'd. Pray and use thy best endevors, that by the Example of a Virtuous Life, thou may'st be a Light to others to lead them to the Truth; Good Example is more enlightning and convincing than Arguments: And have a Care, that thy ill Morals work not a contrary Effect, in giving thy Neighbors a dislike of what thou Professest; for they cannot expect any great good from that which they see works so little good in thee.

2. This Disappointment enrag'd her Enemies against her, wherefore having with great Constancy, pass'd thro' many Torments, she was at length Beheaded, and thus finish'd a Glorious Martyrdom. Pray for Patience, which thou so often wantest in thy frequent Trials: Pray for Courage ever to go on, notwithstanding the many difficulties thou meet'st. Take Care, not to draw Troubles on thy self by doing Ill; for such Suffering is not easily Sanctifi'd: But if thou suffer'st for any Good thou hast done, keep up a good Spirit, and rejoice in this, for this is a Christian Suffering, and has the Promise of a

Blessing.

Bleſſing; ſuch Suffering will certainly be Crown'd: See then, that by Murmuring or Impatience thou loſe not the Opportunity put into thy Hands.

St. *Romuald*, *February* 7.

Eccluſ 45. 1, 6. *Mat.* 19. 27, 29.

1. A Servant of God, who after ſome few Years ſpent in the common Diſorders of the World, at the Age of Twenty, touch'd with the Senſe of his Offences, enter'd into a Religious Houſe, with a deſign of employing Forty Days, in bewailing his paſt Sins, and ſuing for Mercy: But theſe Forty Days he lengthened into Three Years of extraordinary Penance and Sanctity. Learn hence to deſpair neither of thy ſelf or others, for Years of Sin may be ſucceeded by a Life of Virtue: The Grace of God is ſufficient; endeavor ſincerely to obtain this for thy ſelf; and ceaſe not to importune Heaven in Behalf of thoſe, who ſeem to thee even paſt Recovery. But then learn, what kind of Repentance is the proper Re-

 medy

medy of Habitual Sin: 'Tis eaſie for a Chriſtian in this Caſe to conceive a ſenſible Diſlike of his ill Ways; he as eaſily acknowledges his Guilt, and reſolves upon Amendment: But how eaſily too does he return again, for want of taking a due Method for the Cure of thoſe Paſſions; which being ſtrongly rooted in him, are the Cauſe of his Relapſes, and cannot be overcome in a Moment? Habitual Indiſpoſitions of the Body cannot be cur'd by one Doſe, but require a Courſe of Phyſic; and ſo do thoſe of the Mind: And therefore the proper Method is that of this Holy Penitent; 'tis finding out ſome Retirement, where free from all Occaſions, and by long Application to Prayer, Meditation and Reading, and the frequent Viſits of a Charitable Director, a Perſon may thus have the Opportunity of Remedies proportion'd to the Diſeaſe. By this way the moſt violent Paſſions may be overcome, and a true Change wrought in the Heart, without which there cannot poſſibly be a true Repentance. All the reſt is counterfeit; 'tis only drawing a Skin over the Sore, and leaving Corruption within, which muſt neceſſarily break out again; and hence he goes frequently to his Surgeon,

but

but is never cur'd. It were therefore to be wish'd, these Spiritual Retreats were more practis'd than they are; thus there would be fewer Confessions, but more Amendment.

2. S. *Romuald* looking on himself as unworthy of the many Conveniences he found in the Monastery, resolv'd upon a Life of yet greater Austerity, and therefore retir'd into a Desart, where in rigorous Fasting with Bread and Water, almost perpetual Silence and Prayer, he liv'd to the Age of an Hundred and Twenty Years, being there the Founder of the Ermites, call'd the *Camaldulenses*, tho' not without great Difficulties and Opposition, *Anno* 1027. Pray for this Spirit of Penance; and tho' thou art not commanded to follow his Example, yet consider, whether his Example be not a just Reproach to thy Niceness and Self-love, who, under the same Obligation of punishing thy Sins, industriously avoidest every thing, that mortifies, and art so far from condemning thy self to voluntary Chastisements, that by Dispensations or Contrivance, thou eludest all the Pious Designs of the Church, even in those Mortifications, which she prescribes for thy Cure. Examin this Point

in reference to the time of *Lent* now coming on: 'Tis design'd for Punishment of Sin, mastering thy Disorders; and one would think, the Sense of thy past Crimes should make it thy Interest to render it effectual for this end; and yet how many ways dost thou find out to comply with the Letter of the Law, and yet wholly frustrate the principal End of it, as if it were not to thy Purpose? How much dost thou take off from the Uneasiness of Fasting, by unnecessary Eating and Drinking in the Morning, by immoderate Dinners, by a Liberty of Drinking in the Afternoon, by exceeding in Collations, even in things most palatable, and with little Regard to what is allow'd? In fine, how often dost thou so manage, not only particular Fasting Days, but the whole time of *Lent*, that there's neither Punishment nor Self-denial in it? And is not this a total Neglect of the Spirit of Penance, a Forgetting what thy Sins deserve, and an Indifferency to all Amendment? 'Tis certainly forsaking the Gospel, and the Method of the Saints; and how then canst thou expect to arrive at length to the same happy End, and be Companion with them in Bliss? Consider it seriously, and pray

for

for Grace, to amend all thy falſe Steps in this Point.

St. *John de Matha*, *February* 8.

Eccluſ 31. 8, 11. *Luke* 12. 35, 40.

1. THE Founder of the Order of *Trinitarians*, inſtituted by him for the Redemption of Captives, *Anno* 1213. Pray for all the Religious of this Holy Order, that they may faithfully comply with the Spirit of this Servant of God.

2. Pray for all thoſe unhappy Chriſtians, who are in Slavery amongſt Infidels; where being expoſ'd to great Dangers, thro' the want of all Spiritual Helps, they ſtand in need of thy Charity: Pray for all that are in Priſon, that God would be their Comfort, preſerve them from the unuſual Contagion of thoſe Confinements, and give them Grace to ſanctifie their Sufferings; and ſee, that thro' Paſſion, Malice, Revenge, or Hardheartedneſs, thou haſt no Hand in making any ſo unhappy.

3. Pray for all that are Slaves to Sin, that by the Power of Divine Grace,

they may use Violence on themselves, and break their Chains: And let it be thy constant Care, never to be the Occasion of drawing any into this State of Misery. Ill Example, and all Corrupt Discourse, are therefore to be avoided; for 'tis by these Eccouragements the Piety of many is overthrown, and thou communicatest thy Poyson to others, which they too often carry with them to their Grave: And however, in this Case, thou pretendest to repent, yet by what possible Means canst thou make Reparation for the Injury thou hast done? How wilt thou prevent their Condemnation from being thine too? 'Tis a very perplexing Case, and such, I think, as ought to make Christians much more cautious than they are, and not so easie, in laying Snares before their Brethren, for the making them as great Slaves as themselves. Lament then the general Corruption of Christians in this Point, whose common Meetings and Conversation are but too often the Assemblies of *Satan*, and Schools for the propagating of Iniquity; lament, I say, and beg for Mercy; and if thou art any ways concern'd, pray for Grace, and resolve upon Amendment; and remember the

Charity

Charity of this Saint is the only Satisfaction for whatever Injury thou hast done to others: If thou hast contributed to draw any into Slavery, thou must labor for their Redemption, and be as courageous in this Work, as thou hast been forward, in bringing on the Mischief.

St. *Apollonia*, *February* 9.

Ecclus 51. 1, 8, *and* 12. *Mat.* 25. 1, 13.

1. A Virgin of *Alexandria*, who in the time of *Decius* the Emperor, for refusing to sacrifice to Idols, had first her Teeth with Violence struck out, and then was condemn'd to be burnt alive, if she would not deny Christ, and accordingly was brought to the Fire; where having stood for a short time, as it were deliberating, on the suddain, push'd on with a secret Violence of the Holy Spirit, she forc'd her self out of the Executioner's Hands, and leap'd into the Flames, that were prepar'd for her, there offering her self a Sacrifice to Christ, *Anno* 250. Pray for her Courage in the Cause of Christ and

his Truths; and if thy Life be not demanded, yet how often is it, that thy Interest, Convenience and Ease are in some hazard on this Account? One side must yield, and thou must renounce either these for Christ, or Christ for these; and 'tis the Spirit of God or the World must determine thy Choice: Examin, which generally commands in thy Heart. Thou may'st have the Offer of considerable Advantages, of great Gain or Preferment, of Liberties and Satisfactions; but it so falls out, they are not consistent with thy Duty to God; here's thy Trial: Pray for Grace, that as often as thou art reduc'd to these Streits, thou may'st shew the Spirit of this Saint, and leave all for Christ.

2. Pray, thou may'st Partake of that Holy Spirit, which carried her into the Flames; the Action is to be admir'd more than imitated; but in it thou seest the great Desire she had of suffering for Christ, and at the same time discovereſt, how little thou hast of the Spirit of those Primitive Times. All the Occasions of Suffering are equally now the Grace and Gifts of God, as in those former Ages; there's an Advantage, and something desirable in them to every Soul, animated with the Love

of

of God; let no Murmurings then, or Impatience, betray in thee a Diſlike of what, 'tis thy Duty to embrace. Love of Quiet and Eaſe is generally Self-love; but a cheerful Submiſſion to Perſecution, Troubles and Pain, as the Appointments of God, is the Love of God; 'tis offering our ſelves a Sacrifice If thou canſt not ſeek the Occaſion, fail not at leaſt to accept it, and go thro' with Patience.

St. *Scholaſtica*, *February* 10.

A Holy Virgin, Siſter to St. *Benedict*, who, as St. *Gregory* ſays, was choſe from her Cradle to be a Victim, Holy and Agreeable to God. She liv'd for ſome Years in the World, but in ſuch a manner, as if it had been a Solitude; ſhutting her Heart and Eyes from all its Charms, and not letting the conſiderable Inheritance, which fell to her, by her Brother's forſaking the World, to make any Change in the Method of her Life, or in the Deſign ſhe had of going into a Retirement. Wherefore ſhe ſoon follow'd her Brother, chuſing a Place near his Monaſtery, where ſhe

liv'd in the Practice of a general Self-denial, even so, as never to see her Brother but once a Year. Thus being a Pattern of great Austerity, and of all Virtues to such Pious Virgins, as had made choice of Retirement under her Rule, she at length gave her happy Soul into the Hands of God. Pray for all Religious, that the Spirit of this Saint may be preserved amongst them; that having retir'd from the World, they may not find Pretexts to keep yet a Commerce with it; such as is a Dissipation to them, and gives the World Occasion to talk to their Reproach. This thy Charity will encourage them to return it with Encrease to thee, and for all, who are amidst the Dangers of the World, that thou maist be watchful in thy Conversation, careful, in not letting the Blessings of God turn thy Heart farther from him, and ever mindful, that Religious Duties are not only expected in the Cloyster, but must be the Exercise of all, that think in earnest of Heaven. Pray thus for thy self; and if this be not thy Rule, remember, thou art not in the Way to Happiness.

St. *Saturnius*, and other Martyrs, *February* 11.

WHO in the Perſecution of *Dioclesian* and *Maximian*, being apprehended in *Africa* on a *Sunday*, where they had aſſembled, to Celebrate that Day, contrary to the Edict of the Emperor, and refuſing to deliver up their Bibles into the Hands of Heathens to be burnt, were tormented on the Rack, and had their Fleſh torn with Iron Hooks; and being then caſt into Priſon, with a Guard ſet, that none might bring them Relief, they there died of their Wounds and Hunger; together with a Holy Virgin, who made her Petition, to take part with theſe Martyrs, rather than ſuffer the Violence offer'd to her Chaſtity, and her Faith. See what the Martyrs have ſuffer'd, rather than neglect their Duty to God, or betray his Cauſe. What haſt thou to anſwer, who in time of Peace, and amidſt the Opportunities of ſerving God, and learning the Way to Heaven, by reading good Books, permitteſt Sloth and Idleneſs, and every Pretext of unneceſſary Buſineſs, to put by theſe

better

better Employments? Canſt thou think to go to Heaven at thy Eaſe, which coſt theſe ſo Dear? Theſe Examples of the Martyrs muſt either oblige thee to greater Care, or be one Day thy Confuſion and Judgment. Pray therefore for Encreaſe of Grace; and when Sloth or Corruption put Difficulties in thy way, let the Thoughts of their Torments inſpire thee with new Courage and Life; for thus only canſt thou hope to have part in their Glory.

St. *Meletius*, Biſhop of *Antioch*, *February* 12.

HE was promoted to that See in the time of the Emperor *Conſtantius*, when, by the Tumults of the *Arians*, the Eaſtern Church was in Confuſion; and for abetting the Orthodox Faith, was, by their Intereſt with the Emperor, forc'd into Baniſhment; but being again reſtor'd, he was again baniſh'd, and ſo a third time. He govern'd his Flock with a remarkable Exemplarity; and ſo great was the Opinion of his Sanctity amongſt the People, that there was ſcarce any other Name given to

their Children, but of *Meletius*. He submitted to the Orders of Providence with a wonderful Resignation, and at length Died at *Constantinople*, being call'd there to the First General Council assembled in that City. Give Thanks for the Zeal and Virtue of the Primitive Bishops; it was by them Christianity was preserv'd, and thou ow'st it to their Sufferings, that thou art now a Christian. Observe now the Pastors of the Church; Pray for all: Where thou observest a Zeal for Discipline and Piety, let it have thy Commendation, and Pray for its encrease. Where thou seest a Worldly Spirit under an Apostolic Profession, let this move thee to Compassion, and to Pray for in Silence, what thou canst not speak of, without doing Injury to their Character. Good Pastors are a great Blessing, and Ill Ones are as great a Judgment. It is the Sins of the People draw this upon them, see, thou hast no part in provoking such Public Scourges.

St. Ju

St. *Stephen*, Abbot, *Feb.* 12.

BOrn in *Italy*, and having been piously Educated, he resolv'd upon forsaking the World; and for this made choice of a Desart Mountain cover'd with Woods, where with the Boughs of Trees he made a Shelter against the Injury of the Weather, and there liv'd in the Practice of great Austerities, of Watching, Praying and Fasting, to the Age of Fourscore when God call'd him to a better Life, about the Year 1126. If thou hast forsaken the World, let thy Life manifest the choice thou hast made; Retirement has many Advantages, but no Security; if thou art not Faithful to what thou Professest, thou wilt meet with many Temptations, and may'st find at last a deeper Hell, than others, who had not such Opportunities for gaining a better Life. If thou art in the World, walk with fear, because thou art in danger: Many things will offer, seemingly Innocent, and yet will take thy Heart from God. If thou admirest, what others have renounc'd, that they might save their Souls, thou must either

ther conclude them Rash, or that thou art oblig'd to be very Cautious, how thou go'st on. Thou must endeavor to separate thy Heart from the World; otherwise, this will separate it from God, and how then will it ever come to the Possession of him.

St. *Valentine*, *February* 14.

Wisd. 10. 10, 14. *Mat.* 10. 34, 42.

HE was a Priest, and liv'd at *Rome* in the Third Age after Christ, under *Claudius* II. Emperor, where having employ'd his Charity in Instructing the Ignorant and Helping the Sick, he was Apprehended, and after other Torments, put to Death by the Sword. Pray for all of his Character; they have a great Charge, and require a powerful assistance of Heavenly Grace to be Faithful in it. Pray that those, who have undertaken it, may follow the Charity of this Saint, and spare no Pains in Instructing the Ignorant and Assisting the Sick, that so none may Perish thro' their Neglect. The Corruption and Ignorance

of

of the World make their Labors endless; so that seeking Rest and Ease is Inconsistent with their State; and as long as there are any want of their Help, they can never truly say, They have nothing to do. Beg therefore for them Patience, Zeal, Longanimity and Perseverance, for they want all thou canst ask of this kind.

2. 'Tis thought, the Charity of this Saint has given a beginning to the Custom of Chusing Valentines, for an Encouragement to Christians, of giving a Mutual Help to one another in Prayer and other good Works. If thou observest this Custom, perform the Charity, but see, that no Abuse or Sensuality be promoted under this Cover; for there can be no greater Provocation, than to prostitute Holy things, and make them Serviceable to thy Corruption. Trust not then the faires Pretext of Piety, when it is for the Improving a more than Ordinary Familiarity; for this Evil is oftentimes the more dangerous, when the Occasion of it is less to be suspected: 'Tis by this Way well-meaning Christians are insensibly brought into great Snares, while under the Color of learning the Way to Heaven, they unwarily strengthen

then their own Passions, and beginning with the Spirit, too often end in the Flesh. Be charitable then to all, but admit of Familiarity with none; 'tis the Advice of *a Kempis*, and will prove thy best Security in thy weakest Part.

SS. *Faustinus* and *Jovita*, *Feb.* 15.

Heb. 10. 32, 38. *Mat.* 24. 3, 13.

1. TWO Brothers, who by their Zealous Labors in Converting many Infidels to the Christian Faith, drew the Fury of Unbelievers upon them, by whom they were Apprehended, Expos'd to Wild Beasts, Cast into the Fire and Sea; but being Miraculously deliver'd, after many Torments, they were at length Beheaded, and thus finish'd a Glorious Martyrdom, *An.* 121. Pray for their Constancy, their Courage and Patience; and since God leads his most Faithful Servants thro' such difficult Ways, ought'st not thou offer thy self with Patience to go thro' those difficulties he appoints for thee? What are all thy Troubles, if compar'd with theirs? Thou would'st willing-

willingly come at length to the same Crown; but thou would'st have it at an easie Rate: And what is this, but the effect of Self-love, a Love of Ease and Quiet here, without a true Sense or Fear of that Eternal Rest, that is to come, and can this Self-love ever bring thee to the Possession of him, who requires Self-denial, as an indispensible Condition in all those, who pretend to follow him? Consider then seriously, what it is thou pretend'st to, and if it be to Heaven, remember, Patience, Humility and Submission to the Will of God are the Gospel-way to it; the time of Practising these, is in time of Provocations, Persecutions, Troubles, Difficulties, Disappointments and Distress; and if in these Circumstances thou regardest little what God requires, but indulgest thy own Passions, is not this putting thy self out of the Way of Heaven, and neglecting those Opportunities, which he puts into thy Hands, and if well made use of, might be the purchase of it? Resolve now on a better Method, on a Method of Suffering with Humility and Patience, as often as God shall call thee to the Trial. Trust in him, and be Confident, that he that Strengthen'd the Martyrs, will also be

thy

thy Helper, either in delivering thee from thy Troubles, or giving thee Grace to go thro' them; and leave it to him, to do what he knows best for thee.

2. Pray for all that are under Troubles, whether Temporal or Spiritual, that God would be their Protector and Comfort, and strengthen them against all Temptations of Impatience and Distrust. thy Charity to them now may bring Relief to thee, when it comes to thy turn.

St. *Juliana*, Martyr, *Feb.* 16.

A Holy Virgin of *Nicomedia*, who, in the Persecution of *Maximianus*, not consenting to Marry a certain Governor, a Heathen, drew upon her the Fury of her Idolatrous Father, and likewise of him, who had Courted her to Marriage; who finding her not to be prevail'd on by all the Flateries they could propose, commanded her by Order of Justice, to be Hung up by the Hair, to be Cruelly Scourg'd, to be Tormented with Hot Plates of Iron, to be

be Cast into a Furnace, and into Boiling Oyl; and being miraculously preserv'd she was at length Beheaded, and brought to the Possession of her Heavenly Spouse. And art not thou here taught, how much thou art to Value thy Faith, and not to put this to the Hazard, upon any Consideration the World can offer thee? Is not here a Condemnation of their Method, who in disposing of themselves or Children look about for Worldly Advantages of Titles, State or Preferments, and let these Determine their Choice, as to Marriage, Profession or Service, without any regard to the Hazard they run of that which is most valuable, and the only thing above all to be considered? This is not according to the Gospel, which Commands, before all things, the seeking the Kingdom of God and his Justice, and to venture every thing besides for securing this. Resolve to make this thy Rule for thy self and all that belong to thee. If thou art a loser by it, remember, that such Loss will be thy greatest Gain. 'Tis the Loss of the Martyrs, and will not then thy Gain be the same?

St. *Thom*

St. *Theodulus*, Martyr, *Feb.* 17.

ONE belonging to the Family of *Firmilianus* Preſident of *Paleſtin*, in the Third Age, who in his Old Age, mov'd by the Invincible Patience of the Martyrs, being put to Death by his Maſter's Order, believ'd in Chriſt, and was ſo Zealous in his Reſpect to ſuch as were Perſecuted, that he was Condemn'd by his Maſter to the Croſs, on which he ſuffer'd a glorious Martyrdom, Rejoicing in the Honor that was done him, and Praiſing God for thoſe Charitable Offices, which had brought him to this Happy End. 'Tis often ſo Order'd by Providence, that the beſt Propoſals fall with an unexpected Weight upon the Undertakers; and that Chriſtians, by doing good to others, draw great Inconveniencies on themſelves. 'Tis this Apprehenſion diſcourages many from Executing very Pious Deſigns, and their being once Diſappointed puts them by the moſt Commendable Propoſals. But this is nothing but Impatience and Cowardice diſguis'd under the Name of Diſcretion, therefore are not to be conſulted. The better

better Rule, is rather to embrace the present Occasion offer'd for doing good, and then to depend so much on the Divine Conduct, as to leave the Consequence to Providence. If a succeeds well, bless God for it; and if otherwise, embrace the Inconvenience; and if this be done with Submission and Patience, thy Disappointment will be no Loss. Thus thou may'st come to be call'd Fool; but 'tis a Folly more Valuable than their Wisdom, who by a pretended Foresight are too Cautious in doing Good.

St. *Simeon*, *February* 18.

Jam. 1. 12, 18. *Luk.* 14. 26, 33.

1. HE was Successor of S. *James* in the See of *Jerusalem*, and Second Bishop of that Place, being Son to *Cleophas*, a Prelate eminent in Sanctity and Zeal, and was therefore seiz'd by the *Jews*, and Crucified at the Age of an Hundred and Twenty Years; being one of the last of those who had seen Christ on Earth. Pray for that unhappy City, which being Obstinate against

ainſt the Mercies of Chriſt, has drawn
ſting Miſeries on it ſelf: Conſider
e many Bleſſings thou haſt receiv'd,
d the Offers of Grace, that have been
ade thee; and ſee, that by Neglect,
Contempt and Ingratitude, thou pro-
oke not the Divine Juſtice againſt
hee: The Abuſe of Mercies brings a
heavy account after it, and often en-
ils Miſery on Generations. Reflect
on thy Temporal and Spiritual Bleſ-
ings, and ſee in what degree thou re-
ferreſt them to the Giver, and Pray
for the Amendment of all paſt A-
buſes.

2. Pray for all the Paſtors of Chriſt's Church, that they may Inherit the Spirit of this Holy Prelate; Pray for him in particular under whoſe Care thou art: And ſince there's no living in this World without Suffering, remember to embrace thoſe with Joy, which are the Conſequence of a Faithful diſcharge of thy Duty: Follow Innocence and Juſtice, for however they may be often Prejudial to thy Temporal Concerns; yet never think thy ſelf a loſer, as long as there's an Everlaſting Bleſſing attending them. What if Men judge and ſpeak ill of thee; be contented, that God is the Witneſs of thy Fidelity.

Fidelity. 'Tis much better to ſuffer for Juſtice, than to Rejoice in the Fruit of Iniquity. That's the Goſpel-rule which thou Profeſſeſt; the other is the Way of the World, which thou art obliged to renounce: Pray for Grace that thou may'ſt be Faithful in what thou haſt undertaken: Pray for all Chriſtians, that they may renounce what is Corrupt, and be True to the Goſpel whatever it coſts them.

Many Holy *Ermits*, Martyrs. *Feb.* 19.

SUch, as, in the Fifth Century, living in the Deſarts of *Paleſtin*, ſeparated from the World, and from all Converſation, beſides that of God, were Muther'd by the *Saracens*, and by their Cruelty made ſo many Sacrifices to God. Is it not ſtrange that theſe, who had renounc'd all the Goods of this Life, ſhould not be more Exempt from the Evils of it? But ſuch is the Order of Providence, that while the Wicked are often Puniſh'd here for their Iniquities, the Juſt too have their Scourges, either for the Trial of their Fidelity

Fidelity, or to render their Crown more Glorious. If these come to be thy Portion, be not Dejected, nor too positive in concluding them to be the Effect of God's Anger, since there are Scourges of Mercy, as well as of Justice; but accept them with a Peaceable Mind, using thy best and continued Endeavor for moderating all Impatience and Fears, and suppressing those Thoughts, which too curiously Search into the Counsels of God. Leave it to him, to order as he knows best; with an Assurance, that it is in thy Power to turn them to thy Advantage. If thou art in Sin, let them be a Motive to thy Amendment; if thou canst discover no known disorder in thy Life, look on Christ and his Martyrs, and learn from them, how thou art to suffer, and thus thou canst not fail of turning all to thy good, in finding Everlasting Joy the Fruit of such Sorrow.

Many Martyrs, Feb. 20.

IN *Africa* and *Egypt* under *Diocletian*, whose Number was so great, that their Names are known only to God.

Eusebius in his History relates, that he was Witness of many of their Sufferings; that he saw these Holy Martyrs going from one Torment to another without Terror or Dejection, but rather gaining Strength from their Tortures; that he saw Young Men in the Amphitheatre waiting for Wild Beasts, and yet with their Eyes and Heart so fixt on God, as not to move, when Lions came Roaring with open Mouths to devour them. Thus by Fire, Sword and Beasts, Infinit Numbers were offer'd a Holy Sacrifice to God. And what canst thou say for thy self? Hast thou Courage for these Trials? Or must thou with Shame Confess, that thy Patience is worsted in the Common Difficulties of Life, and that, upon Ordinary Disappointments in thy self or others, thou art Tempted to throw up the Cause? What then ought to be thy Business this Day; but to Lament seriously thy Weakness before God, and Importune him to give thee a better Spirit? If Troubles are the Trials of the Just, and the Scourge of the Sinner; on what grounds canst thou Hope to be Exempt? And if submitting to them with Patience be the Way to Heaven, when art thou to begin to make this

this Advantage of them? Pray for what thou wanteſt, and if thou art in earneſt, take ſome Pains to ſtand thy ground, and be not blown down with every Breath, who ought'ſt not to ſhrink at Lions.

St. *Severinus*, Martyr, *Feb* 21.

BIſhop of *Scythopolis*, who being a Zealous Aſſerter of the Orthodox Faith againſt the Errors of *Eutyches*, was by the Violence of his Followers made a Sacrifice to their furious Zeal. The Commendation of this Prelate was his Courage, at a time, when Hereſie had ſo Animated the People, that there needed no other Crime, than to own the Truth, nor any other Executioner than their Rage. But this was no Terror to him, who knew the Victory he had in Dying for Truth. Give thanks for that Grace, which diſtinguiſh'd this Paſtor from ſo many others at that time, who from the Cloyſter and the Deſart took part with Error; and upon this Proſpect beg Grace to eſtabliſh thee againſt all ſuch Weakneſs: In their falling, thou may'ſt ſee what

thou art, and how great thy Dependance ought to be on heavenly Strength. But remenmber, there is as certain Damnation in forſaking the Commandments, as the Creed; and that thy Zeal for one will be no Advantage, if thou Tranſgreſſeſt the other. What then if thy Faith be Sound; is thy Zeal for Virtue ſo too? Both are equally the Precepts of the Goſpel; if thou takeſt part with Vice, and giveſt Encouragement to it by thy ill Example, thou art at War with Heaven; and what Comfort will it be in Hell, if thou art Damn'd for Sin, and not for Obſtinacy in Error?

St. *Peter's* Chair at *Antioch*, *February* 22.

1 Pet. 1. 1, 7. *Mat.* 16. 13, 19.

1. A Day in Memory of S. *Peter* fixing his Epiſcopal See at *Antioch*, where, as S. *Luke* ſays, the Followers of Chriſt were firſt call'd Chriſtians. Give Thanks for the propagation of the Goſpel amongſt the *Gentils*, and pray it may be ſtill more and more enlarg'd, for

for the enlightning all thoſe, who ſit in Darkneſs, and know not God. Pray in particular for the People of the Eaſt; their Miſery is great under the *Turks*, eſpecially in having the Children of their Bowels violently taken from them, to be bred up in all the Errors of *Mahomet*, and become the greateſt Scourge of *Chriſtendom*.

2. Pray for all the Prelates in Chriſt's Church, that as they ſucceed the Apoſtles, ſo they may be Animated with an Apoſtolic Spirit, in renouncing the World and its Ways, and applying themſelves wholly to the good of their Flock. Pray, that none may be admitted to that Dignity, but ſuch as are truly qualified for the Charge, and call'd of God, as the Apoſtles were. In this all Chriſtians are concern'd, and therefore it ought to be a daily part of their Prayers. Pray likewiſe for the Church, for its Eſtabliſhment in Peace and Unity, for the Remedying all Abuſes, Errors and Schiſms, that there may be one Paſtor, and one Fold.

Vigil of St. *Mathias*, *Feb.* 23. or 24.

Ecclus 44. 26. and 45. 10. *Jo.* 15. 12, 16.

'TIS a Day of Preparation for the following Festival, and such as expect the Favors of Heaven, are requir'd to fit themselves for them. Our great Indispositions are Pride and Self-love, and these are best cur'd by Fasting and Humiliation. Fast then so, that there may be some Self-denial in what thou do'st; and if thou art justly Exempted from this Obligation, there are other Mortifications; by which thou may'st answer the Design of the Church. Make it not at least a Day of Liberty and Diversion, but let these give Place to Recollection and Prayer.

It being also the Day of S. *Milburg*, Daughter to *Merwald* King of the *Mercians*, who out of a wonderful Sense of God's Mercy towards her, in bringing her from Heathenism to the Catholic Faith, Founded a Monastery, where she liv'd retir'd Sixty Years, an Example of wonderful Piety, and then gave up her Soul to God, *An.* 722.

Learn

Learn from her, what thy Acknowledgments ought to be for whatever Mercies thou haſt receiv'd; for if thou do'ſt not make the return of them to Heaven in a Life of Virtue, thoſe very Mercies will prove thy greater Condemnation. Pray for thy Country, and all that are in Error; if thy Charity does not daily extend to theſe, 'tis a Sign, thou haſt not a true Senſe of the Mercy God has done for thee.

St. *Mathias*, *Feb.* 24, or 25.

Act. 1. 15, 26. *Mat.* 11. 25, 30.

1. HE was an Apoſtle: Pray for all that are call'd to that Holy Function.

2. He was choſen by Heaven: Pray that all of that Character may be the choice of Heaven.

3. He was choſen to fill the Place of *Judas*: Conceive an humble diſtruſt of thy ſelf, and Tremble at the fall of an Apoſtle; Pray for Heavenly Strength, that by it thou may'ſt be ſecur'd againſt the Sad Effects of Human Weakneſs.

Judas having faln from the Apoſtleſhip, One is to be choſen to fill his

place. Two are propos'd, *Joseph* call'd *Barsabas*, sirnam'd the Just, and *Mathias*: The Apostles join in Prayer, and beg of God to determin the Person, and the Lot fell upon *Mathias*, and he was number'd amongst the Eleven. An excellent Method and Direction left to all succeeding Ages, for the choice of Persons to Ecclesiastical Functions, and contains, First, a Condemnation of their Practice, who, upon the News of any Vacancy, make use of all Arts and Means to thrust themselves into it; who wait not till they are Call'd by those to whom it belongs; but by Friends and Favor endeavor to make such an Interest, whereby they may be call'd and preferr'd to all others. Secondly, it Reflects with as severe a Censure upon all those, who having the Presentation in their own Hands, are not at all Solicitous to look out for the Person, whose Qualifications render him most capable of the Charge; but only consider, how their own Interest lies, and which Way so to place the Favor, that it may be most serviceable, not to the good of the Church or Flock, but to their own Private Concerns. Hence it is, some Relation or Nephew is to be gratified, some Child to be dispos'd of;

and

and if there be none of these, the Offer is made to such a Friend, from whom there is the Prospect of some Advantage. Now all this is a Contradiction to the Method left us by the Apostles, and to all the Gospel prescribes. For as to those, who offer themselves, and solicit for Benefices, their endeavor is to fix the Lot on themselves, and prevent all the Determination of Heaven; they wait not to be call'd by God, as *Aaron* was, but take the Honor to themselves; they stay not to be chosen by Christ, as the Apostles were, but thrust themselves into the Number. And as for the others, 'tis evident how unjustifiable their Proceeding is, who regardless of all Divine Direction, say not to God, with the Apostles *Ostende quem elegeris*; shew, whom thou hast chosen; but have their Eye only on Human Motives, and consult their Interest for their coming to a Resolution. And is it not hence, the Church is so ill provided of Ministers, and such Persons preferr'd to Benefices, who make the Revenues more their Business than their Charge? And to whose account must all the ill Consequences and Scandals of such Proceedings be placed; but to those, who

Inverting the Order of the Apoſtles, take no Care to provide a *Mathias* for the Fall of a *Judas*, but ever run the Hazard of filling the Place of one *Judas* with another?

There are other ill Conſequences of this ..due Method, tho' in a leſſer Concern; as in thoſe, who are left in Truſt for nominating and ſupplying of Funds; and in the choice of Perſons for Places of Truſt. For whereas all thoſe, who are thus Intruſted, have an Obligation of Juſtice, to uſe their beſt Diligence in providing Perſons qualified for anſwering the deſign of the Truſt; how very few are there, who have any regard to this Rule of Juſtice; whilſt in all Nominations, they generally conſider their own Advantage, and let Relations or Intereſt ever determin their choice? In this Point there are very great Abuſes, and moſt intolerable Injuſtices committed, not only in miſapplying the Charity of Pious Chriſtians, and depriving thoſe of the Benefit, for whom it was intended; but even expoſing the very Truſts themſelves to all the Injuries of Covetouſneſs and Rapin. In which Method there is a great Weakneſs, if not Wickedneſs of Man, who being oblig'd to conſult

consult God in all he does, and to solicit for his Grace and Direction, that he may refer all to his Honor and Glory, and ever make this the End of all his Actions; shuts his Eyes against all this Light, and considering only some Private Interest or Advantage, drives wholly at this, making here the Centre of all his Thoughts and Actions. And what wonder after this, if Christians meet with so many Miscarriages, see so very little Fruit of Pious Donations and Institutions, and that there are so many Abuses in all Public Employs, both in Church and State; when Justice and Duty are so generally neglected, God so commonly left out, and all things manag'd by the direction of Private Gain and Interest?

'Tis this is the Root of the greatest Disorders, Corruptions and Injustices in the World, because there are but few of any Public and Generous Spirit, who undertake and carry on things upon Principles of Duty and Justice, with regard to God's Honor and their own Eternal Good: The greatest part of Men are generally prevail'd on by those baser Motives of seeking themselves; and when they cannot make things serviceable to this End, are most

crimi-

criminally Negligent, and let the Cause starve, when they cannot thrive by it. Thus either open or a secret Covetousness is at the Root of all Evils; it was that which cast *Judas* from his Apostleship, and carry'd him to the betraying his Master; and 'tis that, which ought to make all Christians very jealous of themselves, and of all their Proceedings, especially where Gain and Money is in the Case. For tho' he must have renounc'd all Principles of Honor, Honesty and Justice, who Steals, and designedly Wrongs his Neighbor; Yet there are so many Disguiz'd Robberies, and Palliated Injustices; that truly a Man must have a very powerful Influence of Sincerity, Truth and Virtue, to escape being drawn into these Snares: For Self-love is so very Subtil and Ingenious in finding out Reasons favorable to what it desires, that without great Caution, it insensibly leads Men, under the Cover of pretended Right and Justice, into Variety of Frauds and Oppressions; so that even those, who have an abhorrence of all such unworthy Proceedings in their Neighbors, are but too often, thro' an affected Partiality, carried beyond all what they have before condemn'd in others; and when

when their Actions come more particularly to be look'd into, are found to have done such things, which raise wonder in all Sober Men, to think how Persons, otherwise of such good Principles, should be brought to consent to what is so mean, unworthy, and often unjust to their Neighbors. This Money-matter therefore, I take to be so dangerous, that no Body can pass for secure, who has not been try'd; and the Falling of so many, ought to oblige all others to a more than ordinary Care when they come into the Occasions of the like danger; that so no Motives of Private Interest, however fairly Painted over, may be able to draw them from the Obligations of Truth and Justice.

So that the Lesson of this Day, tho' principally directed to Ecclesiastics, and such as have the Right of Presentations, comes however to be the Common Concern of all, as far as they are intrusted with Money-affairs; as of the Wife in regard to the Husband, of Children to their Parents, of Stewards and all manner of Servants to their Masters, of Lawyers to their Clients, of Overseers and Collectors to the Poor; finally, of as many as have any sort of Trust,

Truſt, in Relation to what they have undertaken; there being none of theſe but what are under a great Tie of Fidelity and Juſtice, and are expos'd to many Temptations of Tranſgreſſing their Bounds. Here then, *qui exſtimat ſe ſtare, videat ne cadat*; Let him that thinks he ſtands, ſee he does not fall; let all beg for a powerful Aſſiſtance of Grace, to ſupport them againſt the Power of Private Intereſt, that ſo they may be able to give an account of their Stewardſhip. And becauſe there is a like danger in all other Chriſtian Duties, and there's no Security, as S. *Bernard* obſerves, either in Heaven, or Paradiſe, or on Earth; becauſe the Angels fell from Heaven, *Adam* from Paradiſe, and *Judas* from the School of Chriſt; let the Memory of this Day inſpire all with a diſtruſt of themſelves, and put them on Working out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling, and moſt earneſtly on Importuning him to their Aſſiſtance, whoſe Grace alone is able to ſecure them againſt the Dangers of their own Weakneſs, and of all Snares before them. *Domine, Salva nos, perimus*: Lord, ſave us, or elſe we periſh. Thus, let this Days Devotion be concluded with Acts of a moſt

most Profound Humility, and Fear, and an Entire Confidence in God.

St. *Tharasius*, 8, and 9. Cent. *Feb.* 25.

BEing Secretary of State to *Irene* Empress of *Constantinople*, and her Son *Constantin*, he was Nominated to that See by *Paul* the Patriarch of it, who touch'd with the Sense of his Weakness, in having Thrice Subscrib'd to the Errors of the *Iconoclasts*, withdrew into his Cloyster, that he might there do Penance for his Rashness. Being Consecrated Bishop, his Humility was Remarkable, in renouncing all manner of State and Superfluity both as to Table and Retinue, and not admitting the least Service in his Chamber from any Hand; having that always in his Mouth and Practice; that he came not to be serv'd, but to serve. His Charity was great to the Poor, his Zeal of Discip'in in Reforming Abuses both in Clergy and People, wonderful; and his Courage Apostolical, in opposing the Errors of his time, and standing up against the Injustice of his Prince, who

who caſt off his Empreſs for pretended Crimes, and took one of her Maids of Honor into her place; for which this Prelate ſuffer'd the Confinement of ſome Years, and by his Patience in it prepar'd his Soul for the Liberty of Heaven, to which he was call'd in the beginning of the Ninth Century. His Example gives thee ſufficient Reaſon to Pray for all Prelates and Paſtors: Thou ſeeſt in him, what they all ought to be; if they are not ſo, it ought not to be the Subject of thy Railery, but all of thy Prayers and Tears. Their ill Example is the ſevereſt of Scourges upon the Flock; give no Occaſion of it by thy Sins, and by thy Piety and Penance beſeech God to take this Judgment from his People.

St. *Alexander*, *Feb.* 26.

P*Atriarch* of *Alexandria*, whoſe Promotion to that Dignity ſo exaſperated *Arius*, then a Prieſt of that Church, and Reader of Scripture, that he ever made an Intereſt againſt him, and oppos'd whatever he Preach'd to his Flock; principally in that Point of the Son being

ing

ing Equal to the Father; from whence that Hereſie had its firſt Riſe, which afterwards brought ſo much Confuſion to the Church. By this Prelate's Zeal *Arius* was condemn'd in a Council by him Aſſembled at *Alexandria*, and he had the Comfort of ſeeing his Sentence confirm'd by the General Council of *Nice*. *Arius* ſolicited ſtill to be receiv'd again into the Communion of the Church; but this Biſhop, who knew his Diſſimulation, defended his Flock againſt this Wolf, and having fully ſatisfied all the Duties of his Charge, in his O'd Age made a Happy End. Having recommended to God all the Paſtors of his Church, and beſeech'd him to pour forth on them the Spirit of this Prelate; caſt thy Eyes then on thy ſelf, and ſee, how Faithful thou art in ſatisfying the many Duties of thy State. Sloth, Cowardice, Neglect and Ill Example, are very Pernicious in all Conditions, and bring a heavy Weight of Conſequences on thoſe, who ſhould be more Watchful and Regular. There are great Miſchiefs in Families, as well as in the Church Thou art unhappy, if thou art the *Arius* there; and Criminal ſtill, if thy Neglect be favorable to any other, that is ſo.

St. *Lean-*

St. *Leander*, *Feb.* 27.

BIshop of *Sevil* in *Spain*, a Man of that Eminent Piety and Public Spirit, that he forgot himſelf, when the Service of God and his Flock was before him. His great Affliction were the Errors of the *Viſigoths*, who are all generally infected with *Arianiſm*; but his Prayers and Tears were ſo powerful with the Divine Mercy, that God in a ſhort time made him the Inſtrument of converting to the Catholic Faith not only *Hermenegildus* the King's Son, who Died a Martyr by his Father's Cruelty; but likewiſe afterwards ſo far prevail'd with the Father, that the Care of his other Son was committed to this Prelate, by which Means the whole Nation ſoon after renounc'd its Errors, to the great Comfort of the whole Church, and of this Prelate; who having ſeen the Fruit of his Labors, full of Joy departed this Life in the Sixth Century. Let the Bleſſings attending this Prelate move thee to pray, that a like Spirit may animate the Prelates and Paſtors of God's Church. And let his Zeal raiſe in thee a Compaſſion for all thoſe, whoſe Obſtinacy in Vice and

Errors

Errors keeps them out of the Way of Salvation. Thou hast a Horror of seeing a Leg or a Breast Cut off, or being Witness of a Public Execution: Such Objects damp thy Spirits; what is this to the Consideration of such vast Numbers running into Hell Fire? Pray, that God would remove this Blindness; Labor by Tears and Penance to move Heaven to Mercy: And let no Joy remove this great Misery of thy Neighbor from thy Heart; that thou may'st be ever mindful of the Compassion and Charity, that is due to him.

Many Holy *Priests*, *Deacons*, &c. *Feb.* 28.

WHO, when the City of *Alexandria*, for its Sins, lay under the Scourge of a most Severe Plague, in the Third Age expos'd their Lives for the Service and Comfort of such as were Infected; and the Charity of many of them being rewarded with Death, the Church has thought fit to Honor their Memory, making but little difference, as *Eusebius* says, between such a Glorious Death, and that of the Martyrs:

Adeo

Adeo ut istud mortis genus, quod propter incredibilem pietatem et robustam fidem subibatur, nihil a splendore Martyrii abesse videretur. If the Church has this Value for this Generous Charity, learn thou to set a Value on it, and Practice it, as far as thy Circumstances will permit. There are frequent Occasions of giving Comfort and Help to thy Neighbor; as many as are Diseas'd, Afflicted, or in Prison, call upon thy Charity; and whatever thou canst do for them, either by Visits or Money, Christ takes it, as done to himself, and has promis'd himself for thy Reward. Happy thou, if this Charity be the Business of thy Life; and Happy too, if whatever Time thou canst spare from other Business, be employ'd in this. To how much better account will this turn, than that which is given to Idleness, unprofitable Conversation and Divertisements? Learn only to raise thy Thoughts above Nature, by Offering what thou do'st in this kind to God, and thou wilt certainly lay up for thy self Treasures in Heaven.

February 28, or 29.

IT being the last Day of the Month, give Thanks for all Blessings receiv'd: Examin into the State of thy Soul, see what thou hast amended, and what thou hast yet to amend; and fail not, by a general Act of Contrition, to beg Pardon for thy Sins, and make thy Peace with God; and if there be any Obligations of Justice, which thou art bound to Satisfie, resolve upon a Speedy Compliance.

MARCH.

St. *David*, *March* 1.

1. HE was Archbishop of a City in *Wales*, then call'd *Menevia*, and now of him S. *Davids*, in the time of King *Arthur*, according to the best Historians, about the Year of our Lord 494. Pray for all Bishops in Christ's Church: Pray for thy Country, that God would in his Mercy remove all Errors and Schisms, and establish it in the

the Unity of its Primitive Faith: And let the Ancient *Britains* have this Day a part in thy Prayers.

2. It being the First Day of the Month, Consecrate it, by a Sincere Oblation of thy self to God and his Service. Beg his Blessing on thy self, and all that belong to thee, and beseech him to accompany thee in the discharge of all Duties, and to preserve thee from Temptation and Sin.

St. *Cead*, *March* 2.

HE was Bishop of the *Mercians* about the Year of Christ 664. a Man of great Sanctity, as is Recorded by *Bede*, who as often as the Affairs of his Flock would give him leave, ever retir'd into his Monastery, there to apply himself more closely to God. He visited his Dioceſs always a-foot, and finish'd a Holy Life with a Holy Death. Pray for all the Prelates of Christ's Church, and in particular for those of thy Country, that both by Word and Example they may be Lights to the Faithful, to lead them into all Truth and Holiness. Pray for the People of this Nation,

tion, that God would shew Mercy to them, in removing his Judgments, and and raising such Apostolic Spirits, by whose Zealous Labors, Vice and Prophaneness may be Banish'd this *Island*, and all perfectly United in one Heart and one Mind.

St. *Marinus*, *March* 3.

A General Officer of the *Roman* Army under *Valerian*, who being accus'd for his Faith in Christ, had Three Hours granted him by the Judge, to give in his Answer, whether he would Sacrifice to Idols: When the Bishop of *Cæsarea* taking him by the Hand, led him into the Church, and holding the Book of the Gospels in his Right Hand, and with his Left, Pointing to his Sword, with which he was Girt, bid him chuse, which of the Two he would have. *Marinus*, without any Hesitation, laid his Hand on the Gospels, upon which the Bishop said, Go, be Constant, and doubt not but God will give thee Strength. Having then with the Courage of a Soldier given in his Resolution, he was forthwith

with Beheaded, losing his Sword, but gaining the Promises of the Gospel. To many Christians now is the like choice offer'd; and how great is their Number, who for Temporal Interest leave the Gospel; transgressing all its Maxims to make their Advantage? And what is their Gain, when Accounts are made up, when the Loss of Heaven is the Fruit of their Injustice? Follow thou a better Rule; hold the Gospel in thy Hand, and go no farther than thou canst carry this with thee. If any Advantage be offer'd, and the Condition of the Purchase is offending against the Truth or Justice of this Sacred Volume, renounce the Proposal, for this is giving Heaven for Earth, and Eternity for a Moment.

St. *Casimir*, An. 1493. *March* 4.

Eccles 31. 8, 11. *Luke* 12. 35, 40.

SON to *Casimir* King of *Poland*, who amidst all the Softness of the Court, liv'd with the Austerity of the Desart, in Fasting and Sackcloth, even in his Youthful Years. He was eminent for

his Charity in Relieving the Distress'd, so as to be stil'd the Father of the Poor, and very Jealous of every thing, that could possibly be prejudicial to Chastity. Pray for all those, who live amidst the Dangers of the Court; and in particular for Princes, that being God's Vicegerents, they may encourage Religion and Virtue, and not permit that general Depravation in Persons attending them, by whose Prophaneness, Irreligion and Luxury, their Courts become the Resemblance of Hell, while the Power of God is in the Throne Pray likewise for all Persons of Quality of both Sexes, that they employ not their Youthful Years in Vanities and Dangerous Follies, and sully not the Honor of their Birth, with such Dishonorable Practices, which make them the worst of Slaves, and render them Contemptible both to God and Man. The Abuse of those Blessings, with which they are encompass'd above their Neighbors, will be one Day a very Heavy Charge; and 'twill be an Aggravation of their Hell, to have all their Imperiousness and Pride trampl'd on by Devils. The Method of this Saint in Charity, Piety and Penance, is the only Christian Honor; and 'tis this will raise all that follow it

to the Honor of Saints. The Eccleſiaſtical Seaſon of the Year calls all now to it; ſee to embrace it heartily, labor by an exact Obſervance to make ſome Atonement for all paſt Follies, and never remit thy endeavors, till thou haſt wrought a ſolid Change in thy Soul.

It being likewiſe the Day of St. Lucius.

2. Pope and Martyr, who was put to Death under the Emperor of *Valerian*, *An.* 255. giving his Life for Chriſt, after he had vigorouſly oppos'd the Errors of the *Novatians*, who under the Name of Chriſtians ſo ſtreightn'd the the Mercy of God, as to deny all Pardon of Sin, to thoſe who had faln after Baptiſm, Give Thanks to the Goodneſs of God, who inviting Sinners to him, has left a Remedy for Sin: Raiſe up thy Heart with a firm Confidence in this Goodneſs for the Pardon of all thy Offences; but ſee thou renounce not the *Novatian* Error with another as Pernicious as theirs; and if, with them, thou think'ſt not Pardon too great for God to Grant to Men, take Care thou eſteem it not ſo very little, as not to require much of thy Pains in preparing for it.

St.

St. *Gerasimus*, *Mar.* 5.

AN *Anchorit*, who retiring into a Desart near *Jordan*, suffer'd very much from the Assaults of the Devil, and by his Snares was prevail'd on to take part with Heretics; but being reclaim'd by S. *Euthymius*, he enter'd into a Severe Penance of Poverty and Humility, observing, with others joining with him, an Entire Silence, Five Days in the Week, and on them admitting no other Food but of Bread, Dates and Water. He would not permit those under his Rule to warm their Water, being more Apprehensive of a Relaxation of Disciplin, than of their Death; for having before his Eyes Eternal Evils, the Inconveniencies of a Life that was to end, weigh'd nothing with him; this made him seem Cruel, that he might be truly Charitable to them. In this Method of Mortification and Prayer he made his Way to Eternity, and enter'd into it in the Fifth Century. Let their Example, who are above thy Imitation, excite in thee a Resolution of doing something for overcoming thy self: If thou makest Inclination and the World thy Rule,

thou forſakeſt the Goſpel, which commands thee to renounce both. Thou muſt deny thy ſelf, if thou wilt be Chriſt's Diſciple. Reprove not the Rigor of his Diſciplin; becauſe a Remiſneſs in Obſerving Diſciplin is the Firſt Step to the greateſt Diſorders. Niceneſs, Self-love and Sloth, find Reaſons for diſpenſing with it; but whilſt Enemies plead, thoſe, who will be Friends to themſelves, muſt not ſhew Favor to their Arguments.

St. *Evagrius*, *Mar.* 6.

CHoſen Biſhop of *Conſtantinople* in the Time of *Valens* the Emperor, who being an *Arian*, favor'd ſo much that Party, that there was no Profeſſor of the Orthodox and Catholic Faith ſecure from their Violence. It was a Commendation of this Paſtor, that he ſtood a Courageous Aſſerter of the Truth, when ſo many Prelats, through Weakneſs or Error, abandon'd its Intereſt. But the greater Proof of his Zeal was, that he dar'd undertake this Charge in that City, where he could expect nothing but Trouble and Perſecution from

from the great Power of the *Arians*. But God was not pleas'd to Favor that People with so great a Light; for being forc'd into Banishment by the Emperor's Command, he there prepar'd himself for a better Life, to which he was call'd in the Fourth Century. To Assert the Cause of Truth in difficult Times, requires Heavenly Courage; beseech God to Grant this to all the Prelates of his Church, that they may venture all, rather than prove Deserters. Ask the same for thy self; and for daily Practice take Care, thou be not aw'd by Authority or Affection, to join, in oppressing Innocence, Justice or Truth. 'Tis too Common a Weakness to let Applauses and Reproaches be regulated by what the Company expects; thou canst not follow this Track, without going out of the Way, in Praising and Condemning what deserves it not. Let Justice and Truth be thy Rule in all Cases, and permit no Consideration to draw thee from it. This Rule will fit thee for all Trials, and for Heaven.

St. *Thomas Aquinas*, An. 1274. *March* 7.

Wisd. 7. 7, 14. *Mat.* 5. 13, 19.

1. IN his Younger Years having taken the Habit of the *Dominicans*, his Relations seiz'd upon him, and by all Arts endeavor'd to dissuade him from his so Pious Design; but prevailing nothing, after a long Confinement, he made his escape, and returning to his Monastery, finish'd what before he had begun. Pray for all those, who resolve upon a Religious State, that they may undertake it on the best Motives of God's Honor, and securing their Eternal Lot. Those Parents are to blame, who oppose themselves against so good a Work; and they are more Criminal, who force their Children to such a State: There would be few of these, were there no other Force, but driving out of Doors with a Stick: But since making home uneasie to Children, is forcing them abroad, there are more fall under this Censure, besides those, who bid their Children be gone. And this is an Evil, which deserves thy Charity.

2. *He*

2. Having applied himself to study, he arriv'd to that eminent degree of Learning, as to be call'd the *Angelical Doctor*. He began his Studies always with Prayer; and for the expounding difficult Places of Holy Writ, he added Fasting to Prayer; so that he ever acknowledg'd his Learning not to have been the Effect of his Labor, but the Blessing of Heaven. Follow this Method as far as it falls within thy Sphere; and since Reading Spiritual Books is a Common Duty, begin this always with Prayer, that so thro' the Blessing of Heaven, thou may'st receive Benefit from what thou Readest, to the Improvement of thy Soul. Fail not to do this, as often as thou takest the H. Scripture in Hand, that so the same Divine Spirit, which was Guide in Writing it, may assist thee in Reading it, and secure thee against the Ill Effects of Ignorance, Presumption or Rashness. Pray for all Universities, Colledges, and Places of Learning, that they may follow the Method of this Saint, in taking God for their Helper in Studies; that they may labor to advance in Virtue as well as Learning, and with *S. Thomas*'s Firebrand chace away all Incentives to Looseness and

Impurity. Tis but an ill Preparation for the Care of Souls, to be bred up in a Course of Luxury and Intemperance; and no small Scandal to Christians, to see their Seminaries of Learning to be Schools of Vice, in which they take their Degrees, and cannot easily come out Masters of Arts, but 'tis of more than are Good. Pray for Remedy.

It being also the Day of St. Perpetua *and* Felicitas.

3. Two Young Women of *Africa*, who in the Year 204 being commanded to Sacrifice to the Gods of the Heathens, openly protesting against that Impiety, offer'd themselves a Sacrifice to Jesus Christ, and being put in Prison, after other Cruelties, were expos'd to Wild Beasts in the Theatre of *Carthage*, where they finish'd a glorious Martyrdom. Pray for all, who suffer for their Faith, and in particular for those, who, like S. *Perpetua*, in their Tender Years, have their own Parents soliciting them, by all the Arguments of Tenderness and Love, to renounce that Duty they owe to Christ and his Truths. This is a great Trial, such as requires a very powerful Grace

to

to ſtand Faithful under it, whilſt the Charms of Nature, of Flattery and Love, are more dangerous to Tender Souls, than the Terrors of the moſt cruel Enemies. Pray then for all under this temptation, that as this Saint upon no Conſideration of her unbelieving Father's Gray Hairs and Embraces, and her Mother's Tears, could be prevail'd on to renounce her Faith, ſo they may ſtand unmov'd againſt all like Attempts, and venture all diſpleaſure, before that of God. Pray for thy ſelf, that no Motives of Fleſh and Blood may make thee Tranſgreſs thy Duty: Obſerve but the Temptations, and thou wilt find, thou often want'ſt this Grace.

St. *Felix*, *March* 8.

A Holy Prieſt, who coming from *Burgundy*, was the firſt Preacher, who converted the *Eaſt Angles*, to wit, *Norfolk* and *Suffolk*, to the Chriſtian Faith, and was afterwards ordain'd their Biſhop; where after a Holy Life, he made a Happy End in the Year 650. as 'tis recorded by *Bede*. Pray for thy Country; give Thanks for all thoſe

Apoſtolic Men, by whoſe Labors God brought ſo great a Bleſſing to this Nation, and beſeech him to revive a like Spirit in all thoſe, who ſucceed in their Charge. Pray for the Paſtors of this Nation; that God would Animate them with a True Zeal for the good of their Flock, that they may Feed them both by Word and Example, and be no Stumbling-block thro' Silence, Indiſcretion or Ill Example.

St. *Frances*, *March* 9.

Prov. 31. 10, 31. *Mat.* 13. 44, 52.

1. A Noble *Roman* Matron, who in her Youthful Years declining all the uſual Vanities of her Age placed her Comfort in Retirement and Prayer. Pray for all of her Sex and Age, that being Jealous of the Dangerous Entertainments of the World, they may not open their Hearts to ſuch Impreſſions, which Alienate their Minds from God, make them in Love with Follies, and are not afterwards to be worn out, but with more Pains, than, it may be they'll be ever willing to take.

2. Be-

2. Being afterwards Married, in Compliance with her Parents desire, She became a great Example of Piety to all of that State, carefully avoiding all Public Shews, Entertainments, and the Common Divertisements of the Age; employing in Prayer and the Charitable Assistance of her Neighbor, whatever time she could spare from her Family-concerns; wearing nothing but Woollen, and ever Zealously Laboring to dissuade the *Roman* Ladies from the Vanity of their Expensive Dresses. Let all Married Women Pary, First, That no Excess of Solicitude for their Family, may take off their Hearts from making a Solid Provision for Eternity. Secondly, That by the Love of Shews, Entertainments, and Public Divertisements, they Neglect not the Care of their Families and their Souls. Thirdly, That having done their Duty to their Husbands in such a Decency of Attire, as he requires, they may do their Duty to Modesty and Christian Humility, in affecting no Dresses for the pleasing of Strangers Eyes, or gratifying any Vain Humor for the being more in love with themselves. In fine, That observing Moderation in every Point, they avoid all

all manner of Prodigality and Excess; that Humor take not place of Duty; that what can be spar'd from the Family, and is allow'd them, may be the Relief of the Distress'd, and that they Work out their Salvation by a Patient Submission to the Difficulties of their State. Let them study Virtue, and Pray for Prudence; 'tis by these only they can be qualified for the well discharging the many and great Duties they have on their Hands; 'tis by these they'll either prevent the Miscarriages of their Family, or at least be easie under them; it being the want of these, that generally opens the Gate to Ruin.

3. In her Widowhood she withdrew into a Religious Family, which she had founded; there employing the remainder of her Days in Extraordinary Piety, Charity, Humility and Penance, looking no farther into the World, than for the Relief of the Poor, Comfort of the Afflicted, and Help of the Sick in whose behalf she stoop'd even to the meanest Offices, and in this Method of Charity ended her Days, *An.* 1441. And ought not all Widows pray that this may be their Example? If God has been pleas'd to deliver them from the Solicitude and Engagements of the

the World; if he has taken away their preſent Comfort; ought not ſuch a Deliverance be improv'd into a Holy Solitude, in letting the Concerns of Eternity become now their Buſineſs; and placing their Comfort in God inſtead of Man? Truly it cannot be doubted, but ſuch as are left with any Tolerable Proviſion for Life, have a great Opportunity of Saving their Souls; whilſt having experienc'd the Vanity and Uncertainty of this World, they have time given them for making uſe of this Knowledge, in the purchace of a better; and to Neg'ect this, muſt be a great Aggravation of their Sins; ſo that tho' Levity, Vanity, Prodigality, Unſettledneſs, be Criminal even in the moſt unexperienc'd Years of Youth, in Widows they carry with them a double guilt, ſuch as renders them Contemptible to all Obſervers, and betrays a kind of Obſtinacy againſt all the Deſigns of the Divine Mercy. Such as theſe have Reaſon to ſeek for Remedy by Prayers, and Pray thou for them.

Forty

Forty *Martyrs*, *March* 10.

Heb. 11. 33, 39. *Luke* 6. 17, 23.

1. THey were Forty Soldiers, who about the Year 313. being apprehended in the City of *Sebaste* in *Armenia* under the Emperor *Licinius*, for being Christians, after many Torments, were condemn'd to stand in a Frozen Pond, there to perish by degrees, tho' with the Temptation of a Warm Bath near them, into which they might be admitted upon renouncing their Faith. They all held out with Courage, except One, who sinking under the Torment, purchas'd Relief with the denial of his Faith; but his Place was soon fill'd by their Keeper, who declaring himself Christian, enter'd into the Pond, and became one of the Forty Martyrs, whose Memory is Honor'd by S. *Basil* and S. *Gregory Nazianzen* in their Sermons. Pray for a like Courage under all difficulties; thou hast often Trials, and as often wantest Patience; when wilt thou become a true Soldier of Christ, and stand thy Ground, when thou art Assaulted? Be asham'd of thy own Weakness and In-

Inconſtancy, and let not, for the future, every Petty Trial overthrow thy Reſolutions. Pray then this Day for New Strength of Mind, confeſs thy Infirmity, humble thy ſelf before thy Lord, and beſeech him to aſſiſt thee, that whilſt thou honor'ſt his Martyrs, thou may'ſt improve daily by their Example.

2. Let the Fall of that Unhappy One fill thee with Fear of thy own Weakneſs, and Diſtruſt of thy ſelf. What Aſſurance haſt thou, that thou loveſt God more than he did? Canſt thou ſhew greater Proofs of thy Love, than he, in the Variety of his Sufferings before his fall? And yet he falls at length, a Jailor takes his Place, ſuffers what the other cou'd not, and carries away his Crown. Humble thy ſelf therefore under the Hand of God; Pray, thou may'ſt not be tempted above thy Strength; Offer thy ſelf to all Trials, but with a Confidence only in the Aſſiſtance of the Divine Grace, which is ſufficient for thee: And remember, to Contemn none; for, it may be, thoſe very Perſons, whom thou contemneſt, when call'd to it, will outdo thee in Suffering with Perſeverance.

Many

Many *Martyrs*, *March* 11.

THose, who, in the Persecution of *Maximinus*, suffer'd at *Antioch*, as is related by *Eusebius*. Some were laid on Coals, to be Tormented with a Lingring Death; others stood unmov'd till their Hands were consum'd in the Fire, rather than touch the Victims offer'd to Idols: Others, by a particular Instinct, cast themselves out of Windows and into Rivers, that they might not become a Prey to the Violence offer'd to their Chastity and their Faith. Thus did the fear of losing God powerfully Work in the Hearts of those Christians, that they found Comfort in the greatest Torments, and chose any Death, rather than to Die to God: Such was the Power of Justice and Truth in them. If thou desir'st to bring thy Soul to this Happy Disposition, learn to have that true Respect for Justice and Truth in all Cases, as to let no Consideration perswade thee to Transgress them. Be Just in all thy Dealings with thy Neighbor, and Tolerate not in thy self or others a Custom of Lying; for if the Hopes of a little Gain prevails on thee to be Unjust;

juſt; if for Vanity, or eſcaping a Reproof, thou makeſt Bold with Truth, and takeſt Shelter in Lies, thou art not in the Way of giving thy Life for that Cauſe, for which thou haſt ſo little regard, as to Act againſt it for every Trifle. Let thy Practice be, to ſuffer ordinary Inconveniencies for the ſake of what is Juſt and True; thus wilt thou be beſt prepar'd to give thy Life, if God ſhould call thee to it.

St. *Gregory*, *March* 12.

2 *Tim.* 4. 1, 8. *Mat.* 5. 13, 19.

1. HAving liv'd a Monk for ſome time eminent for Sanctity, he was afterwards Abbot, and upon the Death of *Pelagius*, choſe Biſhop of *Rome*. In this Dignity he preſerv'd a wonderful Humility, was ever careful in regulating the Clergy, in promoting the Honor and Worſhip of God, in Relieving the Poor, having a Liſt of all that were in that City and the Neighboring Villages, and never Dining, but with ſome of them at his Table; and tho of a very Infirm Diſpoſition of

of Body, yet was ever Vigorous in the Publick Concerns of his Flock, and in his Vacant Hours either Reading, Writing, or Dictating to others such Holy Lessons, which discover the great Sanctity of this Prelate, and serve for Food to all Pious Souls. Pray, that all his Successors may inherit his Spirit; that his Example may be a Rule to all the Prelates of Christ's Church; that their Dignity and Revenues may not be abus'd to the Support of Vanity; that they may not study their own Ease and Convenience, but Sacrifice their Lives to their Duty, in a perpetual Solicitude for the good of their Flock, in taking away Abuses and Scandals, in regulating Church-men, in giving Example to the Laity of a Gospel-life, and Relieving the Necessities of the Oppress'd and Poor. Pray for his present Holiness, that God would direct and assist him in the whole Discharge of his Duty.

2. It was this Prelate, who observing some English Youths Sold at *Rome* for Slaves, and understanding their Nation to be yet Heathen, mov'd with Compassion, sent S. *Austin*, with some other Religious Men, *An.* 596. into their Country, by whose

Zea-

Zealous Labors it being converted from Infidelity to the Christian Faith, he is therefore stil'd by S *Bede*, *The Apostle of England*. Give God Thanks for the Light of the Gospel thus brought into this Nation: Pray for the Establishment of it, and beseech Almighty God to remove all Obstinacy, Prejudice and Blindness, from all deluded Souls, and solicit in particular in their behalf, who sincerely seek him. Pray likewise for all the Pastors of this Nation, that they may faithfully Labor in seeking the Lost Sheep, in reclaiming them from Vice and Error, and that God would give a Blessing to their Endeavors.

St. *Euphrasia*, *March* 13.

HER Father was *Antigonus* a Principal Man in the Court of *Theodosius* the Younger, after whose Death, going with her Mother into *Egypt*, she enter'd into a Monastery at *Thebais* of great Rigor and Piety. Her Mother being Dead, she writ to the Emperor, who had sent for her to Marry a Person of Quality, desiring his leave, that having chosen Jesus Christ for her Spouse,

Spouse, she might have no other provided for her: Withal requesting that all the Estate, left her, might be given to the Poor, the Slaves be set at Liberty, and all Debts be releas'd to such as ow'd them. Being thus settled, her Principal Business was in the Meanest Offices, in carrying Wood and Water; her Fasting was Incredible, Eating but once in Four Days; the Temptations she suffer'd were Severe; but she overcame all by Mortification and Prayer, and in these Exercises ended her Life at the Age of Thirty in the Fifth Century. This cannot be thy Method; but yet thou ought'st not to go contrary to these Saints: if these renounc'd the World, thou art not to love it: If these were affraid of Riches and State, thou art not to think them thy Happiness: If these denied their own Wills, thou must not be fond of thy own: If these loved Labour, thou art not to love Idleness. This is not the Distinction betwixt Religious and Laity, but of Good and Evil Christians. Whilst then thou livest in the World, remember, Salvation is as much thy Business, as of the Religious; and since they go according to the Gospel, thou

thou canſt not be ſafe, but by coming as near them as thou art able.

Two *Ermits*, Martyrs, *March* 14.

IN the Fifth Century, when the *Lombards*, a Barbarous People, waſting many Places, and ſhewing a particular Averſion to Religion, carried their Perſecution even into the Deſart, where they ſported themſelves with the Blood of *Saranus* an Abbot, and Seizing on Two *Solitaries* in their Hermitage, made their Sufferings their Entertainment, and faſtn'd them to a Tree, where they Hung Alive all Day, and at Night gave up their Spirits to God. Strange Method of Providence, thus to permit Cruelty to reach the Deſart! But where is the Injury, for thoſe, who are daily Sighing for Heaven, to be ſet forward in the Way, and to have that Work finiſh'd for them by another's Hand, in a Day which they had been laboring for many Years? Death cannot be eſteem'd a Puniſhment, but where the Love of this World makes a Soul unwilling or affraid to leave it. It can be only in theſe unhappy Circumſtances

ſtances Death carries Terror with it. For to a Soul that loves and deſires the Poſſeſſion of God, it cannot be a real Trouble, to be call'd to the Enjoyment of him. Make Heaven thy Buſineſs, and then the Afflictions of this Life will not be thy Misfortune, nor Death thy Puniſhment.

St. *Matrona*, *March* 15.

A Servant to a *Jewiſh* Woman in *Theſſalonica*, in the Third Century, her Miſtreſs obſerving her great Fidelity, her Humility and Patience, ſuſpected her to be a Chriſtian; and upon Examination, being ſatisfied of the Truth, ſhe began to Treat this Poor Maid with great Severity, hoping by this Expedient to make her quit her Religion; but finding her ſelf diſappointed, ſhe was ſo Tranſported with Rage, that taking up a Stick, ſhe Beat her ſo long, till ſhe expir'd under the Cruelty of her Blows. This Conſtancy was ſo admirable, that the Church has thought fit to make a Yearly Memorial of it on this Day. Thou ſeeſt here the great Advantage, that may be made

made of whatever thou ſuffer'ſt for thy Faith, as likewiſe, that Patience in ordinary Difficulties of Life are the beſt Preparation for greater Trials. Neglect not theſe Occaſions of Improvement, that ſo thou may'ſt engage God to thy Aſſiſtance, when Dejection and Anguiſh threaten. This Day ought to be obſerv'd by all Servants, that ſeeing here the Example and Reward, they may learn Fidelity in what they undertake, Patience in all the Hardſhips of their State, and Conſtancy in Faith, amidſt whatever difficulties their Circumſtances may bring upon them. 'Tis eaſily underſtood, how Fidelity, Patience and Humility, may raiſe Saints out of this Rank of Chriſtians; and as plain, how by Paſſion and neglect theſe Opportunities may be loſt, and their Service here be ſucceeded by an Eternal Slavery.

St. *Abraham*, 4 Cent. *March* 16.

IN his Youth, his Parents Importuning him to Marry, tho' he knew not how poſitively to Contradict them, yet when the time appointed was come, he

he withdrew from them in a Disguise, and entring into a Solitude, he was so charm'd with it, that no perswasions could oblige him to quit it. Having liv'd thus many Years, a Neighbouring Bishop, knowing his Sanctity, importun'd him from his Cell to go and Preach to a Town, whose Obstinacy in Idolatry had render'd all the endeavors of the Bishop Fruitless. Being call'd to this Combat; he Preach'd to that People Repentance and Faith in Christ, and they seeing no Hopes of being deliver'd from his Importunity, resolv'd to Stone him; and having done it, as they Thought, he yet outliv'd that Storm, and soon appear'd repeating the same Lesson to them, and and they again repeated their Cruelty and so a Third time, when they left him for Dead: But God miraculously preserving his Life, he came again with a New Zeal: Upon which being touch'd from Heaven, they receiv'd the Faith of Christ, and were Baptiz'd, but he returning to his Solitude, after many years of great Sanctity there ended his days. And may not his Persevering Charity be an Encouragement to all Pastors, in their endeavors of reclaiming the Lost Sheep? May it not be a di-

rection

rection to thee, in not being too hasty in despairing of their Amendment, who seem as yet Deaf to all thy Advice? Have then a true Compassion for all in Sin and Error, let thy Charity to them be untir'd. Perseverance is a Force upon Heaven, and is the most powerful Perswasive upon the Hearts of Men: And if, at last, they hear thee not, remember, thy Charity is not lost; it will be Fruitful to thee, if not to them.

St *Patrick*, *March* 17.

Eccles 44. and 45. *Mat.* 25. 14, 23.

1. BOrn in *Great Britany*, and after some Years spent in the Exercise of Extraordinary Piety and Penance, was ordain'd Priest, and then Bishop, and sent by Pope *Celestin* into *Ireland* to Preach the Gospel, which he perform'd with such Success, that the Nation he had found Infidel, he liv'd to see wholly Christian, and after so Plentiful a Harvest, Died amongst his People in the Fifth Century; from which time that People amidst so ma-

ny Revolutions, has been ever Constant to the Faith receiv'd from this Holy Prelate their Apostle. Pray for all those, who like this Prelate, engage in the Apostolic Life, that the Blessing of Heaven may ever attend their Labors, in the Conversion of Souls from the Darkness of Vice and Error to the Light of Virtue and Truth. Pray, they may prepare themselves to be the happy Instruments of the Divine Power and Goodness, by the Method of this Saint; not by indulging themselves in a Life of Sense and Ease, but by the Prescriptions of the Gospel, in a Course of true Piety and Self denial, and forsaking all to follow Christ; that so their own Lives may be no Reproach, but an Example of the Doctrin they teach.

2. Pray for that People, which receiv'd their Faith by the Preaching of this Saint, that God would give them Patience under all Calamities, and a Christian Zeal for reforming all Abuses, and living up to that Truth, they have been taught.

3. Pray, in thy own behalf, for a Docil and Humble Spirit, that no Humor or Self-love may render their Endeavors Fruitless, who labor for thy

good;

good; that no Ill Habit, no Authority of Cuſtom or Practice may harden thy Heart againſt thoſe Impreſſions, which are the effects of the Divine Goodneſs, and deſign'd to bring the Level of the Goſpel. Reflect on thy ſelf ſeriouſly, and ſee, whether the want of this Holy Diſpoſition be not the true Reaſon, thou receiveſt ſo little Benefit from what thou heareſt or readeſt. However, raiſe up thy Soul to God by Hope, and believe, that Grace and Power, by which whole Nations have been converted, is ſufficient alſo for thee: Deliver me, O God, from an Obſtinate and Obdurate Heart.

St. *Edward*, *March* 18.

KIng of the Weſt *Saxons*, and Murther'd by his Step-mother Queen *Alfred*, in the Year 978. Pray for all Chriſtian Kings, that God would be their Protector.

It being alſo the Day of S *Alexander*, a Biſhop of *Cappadocia*, who going to Viſit the Holy Land, was Solicited by *Narciſſus*, then Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, but diſabled by Age, to be his Co-adjutor;

to whom by particular Direction from Heaven, he assented; and after his Death, Succeeding to his Charge; he was Seiz'd by Order of *Decius*, and after a Cruel Imprisonment, brought to *Cesarea*, and there put to Death, in the Third Century. Pray for all the Pastors of God's Church: Thou must be sensible, how much they stand in need of the Divine Grace, for satisfying the Infinit Duties of their Charge, and how Pernicious their ill Example or Remisness is to the Flock: Let thy Charity be answerable to their Necessity; and think not such Prayers Lost, for the more Public thy Piety is, it is the more Generous, and more Beneficial to thy self in particular.

St. *Joseph*, *March* 19.

Eccles 45. 1, 6. *Mat.* 1. 18, 21.

1. ON the Festival of this Saint, who join'd Virginity with the State of Marriage, let Virgins pray for the Divine Protection against all Temptations and Snares.

2. Let all Married Persons pray for Con-

Conjugal Chastity, which is not only injur'd by open breach of their Mutual Fidelity, but by Variety of other Abuses.

3. Let Parents pray for Grace, for the Faithful Discharge of all Duties towards their Children.

4. Let all who have the Care of Families pray they may be wanting in no part of their Charge, that Disciplin may be preserv'd by their Care, and Virtue encourag'd by their good Example.

St. *Joseph* was chose by Almighty God to be the Chaste Spouse of the Virgin *Mary*, and, under the Reputation of Father, to have the Care of the Son of God made Man, to Protect him in his Infancy, and Secure both Mother and Son against the Cruel Designs of *Herod*. It was he, whose great Virtues were recompenc'd even in this Life, by being made the Eye witness of the Virtues of the Divine Jesus, in Possessing him under his Roof for many Years, and Seeing him, whom Kings and Prophets had desir'd to see, but was not granted them; and not only in Seeing, but in Hearing, in Carrying him in his Arms, in Embracing and Feeding him, and being made the

Depository of those Divine Secrets, which were committed to no other. His Life has not been writ by Men, but by the Holy Spirit himself, who has left recorded in the Gospel his most considerable Actions; and it will be our Happiness in this Festival, if we can learn some of those great Lessons, we are taught by his Example.

And First, since the Care of Jesus, was, by the Eternal Wisdom, left to an Humble Tradesman, have not here all of that degree, as also all House-keepers, a great Instruction; that Sanctity and Perfection is not to be thought the Property of Ecclesiastics and Religious, but that their Condition also is capable of it, and that, in the New Law, it is expected from them? In this they see, the daily Toil of a Laborious Life is no exclusion to Jesus, but that he may dwell in the midst of them, while with the Sweat of their Brows they are Working for Bread, and the Provision of their Families. Nay, since they see him make choice of such an abode, they cannot doubt but in this all their Labors are not only Approv'd, but Consecrated by him, and that he has declar'd a *Laborious Life* to be a *Holy Life*. Let it be only their Care to join In-

Innocence with their Toil. Season it with daily Prayer, and Sanctifie it by a repeated Oblation to Almighty God, in the Faithful Discharge of the Duties of their State, to which they are call'd, and they can have no just Reason to complain of their unhappy Circumstances, but rather rejoice in seeing their Life to be a Penitential Life, even a performing of the Penance enjoin'd by God himself on the Sons of *Adam*, at their Exclusion from Paradise: Since it cannot be question'd, but these stand much fairer for the Pardon of their Sins, in undergoing the Punishment, than those others, who living at Ease, feed on the Sweat of other Mens Brows, and wholly Dispence with themselves as to this part of their Penance. Nay since these may observe, that those Primitive Christians, who studied the greatest Perfection, took in this Laborious and Penitential part; since the Apostle Gloried in it, and it is now the Practice of that Religious House in *France*, which for its eminent Sanctity, is the Admiration of this part of the World, they cannot apprehend their most Painful Labors and Daily Employments to be a hindrance of Salvation, but rather to be one part of a Christian Life,

and very proper for the gaining a Happy Eternity; it being with such the Divine Jesus delights to dwell. And if he be not always with them, they may be assur'd, it is not their Labors drive him thence, but either their Love of Idleness, in Neglecting these, or because not content to depend on their Industry and Pains, they make use of Lies, Frauds and Injustices, whereby to over-reach their Neighbor, and enrich themselves by wronging him. Were it not for these Unwarrantable Methods, I know of no State, that might be more favor'd by Heaven, than that of Laboring Christians: Would they but renounce these Practices, be Diligent and Faithful in their Callings, keep up Discipline, observe their Times of Prayer and other Spiritual Duties, they might be so many Families of Saints, have Jesus their Companion here, and their Just Rewarder hereafter.

A Second Instruction we have from this Saint in his conduct to the Virgin *Mary*, when having reason to question her Fidelity, he thought of leaving her; but yet in such a quiet way, and without noise, as to cast no blemish on her Reputation. He was a Just Man, and without

without Condemning or Accusing, was resolv'd to commit the whole Cause to God; in this, leaving an excellent Model of Charity to all Christians, for preventing their taking part in their Neighbors Sins, by censuring or rashly exposing what they apprehend blameable or unjust in their Conduct. It would be well, could we never admit of any disadvantageous Thought or Suspicion in regard of our Neighbor; but we see in St. *Joseph*, how almost impossible it is, not to fall into these Temptations; but however, it is in our power to defend our selves against the sinful part, by rejecting those Thoughts, as not belonging to us, or at least by imposing an eternal silence on our Tongues, by never making that the subject of our Discourse, in which the Reputation of others is concern'd. It is something wonderful, that so often experiencing, as we all do, the mistaken and rash Thoughts of others in regard of our selves, we are not more suspicious of the Judgments we are too apt to make in the concern of others; and yet more surprizing, that being so very nice in every thing that touches us, we are yet so very forward in bringing our Neighbor on the board, and making his failings

ings the subject of our Railery and most diverting Entertainment. Strange, we should so little reflect, and not think sometimes, how we should take it, were it our own case, and by this Consideration, put a stop to such uncharitable Inclinations, in doing no otherwise to our Neighbors, than we desire they should do to us! But God is a just Revenger; and I question not, but those, who are most forward and censorious, have, by his Permission, as many Tongues to lay open their Sores, and to return all their rash Constructions on themselves; besides the punishment of a strange blindness, into which he often permits them to fall, in ridiculing and condemning others for such Indiscretions and Faults, which are much more remarkable in themselves, than in those they censure with so much Severity; and therefore raises no small wonder in the Hearers, to see them so very sharp-sighted abroad, and so very blind at home; so that while they strike at others, they become their own Executioners, and wound themselves; which at the same time betrays a great indisposition of Soul, by discovering their own failings to be inexcusable, in being Sins against knowledge, but that thro'

thro' an affected stupidity they either will not take care to see them, or pains to amend them. It were therefore greatly to be wish'd, we cou'd learn something from the conduct of this Saint, so particularly remark'd in the Gospel, in being more Cautious in a Point, wherein our Neighbor's Reputation and our own Souls are so very much concern'd; so as ever to let all that alone, which belongs not to us; to prevent all suspicions as much as may be, and never to bring that in publick, which is injurious to our Neighbor. This is the Method of St. *Joseph*, and he follow'd it, as the Scripture says, because he was Just; and if we observe it not, 'tis because we are Unjust.

Another Lesson we have from this Saint, in his Obedience to the Will of God, in quiting his Convenience and Home, and flying into *Egypt* for the Preservation of Jesus: Which is an Instruction to Pastors, of the Care they are to have, in preserving Jesus in the Souls of as many, as are under their Charge; and that for this they are to spare no Pains, nor be Affraid of exposing themselves, not only to Inconveniences, but to Dangers too; because this is the Obligation of their State, and the Express

Will

Will of God, who requires it from their Hands; and if any lose Jesus, thro' their Neglect, the Loss will be demanded from them 'Tis and instruction likewise to all the Faithful, of what they are to hazard on the same account; there being very few, who at some time or other, are not oblig'd to venture great Inconveniences, even to the forsaking Parents, Friends and Home, and seek for shelter amongst Strangers, for the securing their Faith to Jesus, and giving Proof of being his Disciples. Who is there, at least, that is not put to this Trial, for the keeping a good Conscience and Support of a Virtuous Life? The World is so Corrupt, Company, Friends and Conversation, lead so many Ways to Sin, that whoever has not learn'd to flee, and venture all the Inconveniencies of such a Flight, can never preserve Jesus long in their Souls: And this must be, tho' there be no other Prospect, but of an *Egypt* before them, where they are to live separated from all Acquaintance, without the Comfort of Friends, or other suitable Conversation. But what then? Those who will hazard all this for the sake of Jesus, and the fulfilling his Law, will find all these Worldly Comforts abundantly

dantly supp'lied in the Possession of him, and that in losing all they have gain'd all. This is the Doctrin of Self denial, this is the Command of forsaking all for Christ's sake, and of loving nothing more than him, so often Preach'd in the Gospel, and laid down for the Foundation of a Christian Life; and whoever has not learn'd this, has not yet begun to be a True Disciple. But, O God, how great Grace is necessary for us in this our State of Weakness, to follow these Lessons of this thy Servant! Help us therefore in thy Mercy, and since thou hast provided us with such Examples to direct us in thy Way, let not thy Grace be wanting, by which we may not only purpose, but effectually walk in it all our Lives.

St. *Joachim*, *March* 20.

Eccles 31. 8, 11. *Mat.* 1. 1, 16.

1. FAther of the Virgin *Mary*: A Day for Parents to offer up their Prayers to Almighty God, that they may be Faithful in the Discharge of their Duties towards their Children,

in

in giving them good Instruction, good Example, and due Correction. God requires these at their Hands; and to be wanting in any one part, is not Consistent with a good Conscience, but may easily come to be the Loss of their own and their Childrens Souls. 'Tis failing in these Duties, is one of the great Occasions of the so general Corruption of Youth; whilst Parents, whose Care it ought to be to cultivate their yet Tender Souls, by p'anting in them the Seed of the Gospel, and keeping down whatever may hinder its Growth, train them up in the Corrupt Maxims of the World, put them forward in those things, which promote Liberty, Vanity, Pride and Sensuality, and give them an early Knowledge of what they must either unlearn, or else perish in the Practice of it. 'Tis this unhappy Method S. *John Chrysostom* so long ago lamented, and after having consider'd the Solicitude of Parents in procuring for their Children what is wholly Superfluous and Unprofitable, and neglecting what is Necessary, condemns them as their greatest Enemies, and Contrivers of their not only Temporal, but Eternal Misfortunes. If thou hast any part in this Guilt,

Guilt, ſeek timely Remedies, if it be yet in thy Power; let not Weak Nature be now thy Rule, but Solid Reaſon and Religion, and ever force Inclination to bend to theſe. Study not to Gain thy Children's Love, by what is likely to make them Miſerable, and be one Day the Puniſhment of thy Indiſcretion. Their Inclinations and Deſires are naturally Corrupt, and they apprehend not the Miſchievous Effects of them; therefore are Parents put over them, prudently to Moderate and Over rule them in theſe; if thou do'ſt not this, thou preverteſt the Order, God has eſtabliſh'd; inſtead of governing, permitting thy ſelf to be govern'd by them, and in this depriving them of all the Benefits deſign'd them in the Parents Care, and expoſing them to the ill Conſequences of their own Weakneſs, Follies and Paſſions. Pray for Remedy againſt this Important Evil, and if thou haſt no part in it, Pray at leaſt for thoſe that have: 'Tis a Point deſerves a Univerſal Charity; the Public good, and the Salvation of Infinit Souls very much depending on it.

It being also the Day of S. Cuthbert.

Who being a Monk in *Northumberland*, after many Years of an Ermitical Life, was chosen Bishop of *Lindisfern*, and after Two Years quiting that Dignity, return'd to his Solitude again, about the Year 688. Pray for thy Country, and all the Pastors of it, that being watchful in the Concern of their Flock and their own Souls, they may live to Edification, and do good to all.

St. *Benedict*, *March* 21.

Eccles 45. 1, 6. *Mat.* 19. 27, 29.

1. HAving receiv'd good Education from his Parents, and observ'd the Corruption of the World, he resolv'd, for better Security, to withdraw himself from it; and having found a deep Cave remote from all Inhabitants, he enter'd into it, and continu'd there for the space of Three Years in Prayer, Mortification and Fasting, none being privy to his Retirement, but one Religious Man, whose Care it was to supply him with Bread. Offer up

up thy Prayers in their behalf, who are engag'd in the Sinful Corruptions of the World, and beseech God to inspire them with the Thoughts of retiring: 'Tis impracticable for all to hide themselves in Desarts; but there are none, who have it not in their Power to withdraw from so much of the World at least, as is to them the Immediate Occasion of Sin. This all are strictly oblig'd to, and without it, all Thoughts of Repentance are but Superficial and Counterfeit. 'Tis true, this cannot be done without great Self-denial and Penance; but is it not true too, there's no possibility, without these, of Disingaging from any Sinful State, or obtaining Pardon of Sin? Without a Sincere Change of Life, there can be no Conversion; and if no Conversion, no Repentance; where then can be the Hopes of Pardon? Great Resolution and Courage is necessary for this Work, beg God to give these to all Sinners. Look also well into thy own State, and as far as thou see'st Penance, the Forsaking any part of this World, necessary for thy Amendment, resolve heartily upon the undertaking it. Thou hast the Example of Saints, and the Church, at this Season calling thee

to

to it: Let no Niceneſs or Self-love link thee to thy Sins, and hinder the Effects of Mercy: Who knows if thou ſhalt have another Opportunity given thee?

2. Being diſcover'd at length in that Retirement, he was ob'lig'd to quit it; but however liv'd ſtill in Solitude, and remitted nothing of his uſual Rigors; and amidſt theſe it was God Tri'd his Servant, permitting him to be Aſſaulted with moſt Violent Temptations, which were ſo very lively and preſſing, that they rais'd in his Imagination Thoughts of laying by all, and returning into the World. Being therefore Jealous of himſelf, and truly Apprehenſive of the Danger, in which he was, he took a Reſolution of Repelling Force by Force, and going into the Field, laid himſelf down in the midſt of Nettles and Briars, and roul'd there ſo long till the Pain of his Torn Fleſh had quite Extinguiſh'd that Fire, which his Enemy had kindl'd; and thus the Wounds of his Body became the Cure of his Dying Soul: For from that time this Holy Man own'd, he was never Moleſted with the like Temptations. Pray for all thoſe, who are diſquieted with the Suggeſtions of a Malicious Enemy; no

Life,

Life, tho' the most retir'd, is Exempt from them in one way or other, and 'tis very Troublesom to Pious Souls, to be thus Persecuted; being not only a Discouragement, but almost enough to carry those, who consider them not Right, on the very Brink of Despair; and therefore they stand in need of good Advice for their direction under these Difficulties, to give them Assurance, that Temptations are the Trial of thy Fidelity, give them Opportunity of exercising many Virtues in humbling themselves under the Hand of God, in making most earnest Application to him for his Assistance, and obliging them to a more than ordinary watchfulness over all their Ways; but that they cannot Prejudice their Souls, tho' they were as lasting as their Lives, except only with their own Consent. *Latrare potest, mordere non potest nisi volentes.* Let them only be careful to follow S. *Paul*'s Advice; *Tentatio non vos apprehendat, nisi humana*, not to run unadvisedly into Danger; and as for such Temptations, which are the Unavoidable Consequence of Nature or their State, to Trust in God, who who will not forsake those, whom he thus exercises, but give them Grace to improve

improve under their Trial; *Facies cum tentatione proventum.* Which above all is to be expected in those, who sensible of their Danger, by Discreet Mortifications, are Solicitous to overcome. But this requiring the Grace of God, Pray for all that are in these difficulties, that God would be their Protector and Comfort. And if thou art at present in Peace, prepare at least against the Day of Battel.

3. This Holy Man, eminent for his Sanctity, was after this importun'd by some Religious to be their Abbot, and take on him the Care of their Monastery; but not Relishing the Rigor of his Disciplin, in which he oblig'd them to live, they soon grew weary, and resolv'd on a Wicked Expedient of removing him, by putting Poyson in his Drink: But God was pleas'd to disappoint their Malice, and deliver his Servant by Miracle; for upon his making the Sign of the Cross over the Glass, it immediately fell in Pieces; and being inform'd of their Design, he took his leave of them, desiring them to make choice of some other Person more fit for their purpose. Going thence into a Desart, he was soon follow'd by many Holy Men, and after having

promo-

romoted a Monaſtick Life and eſta-
liſh'd a Rule, which has ſince brought
orth many Great Biſhops and Popes,
fter having wrought many Miracles
oth on Bodies and Souls, he made a
Happy End in the Year 542. it be-
ng about the Year 494. when he
etir'd into the Deſart. Give God
Thanks for his Extraordinary Favors
beſtow'd on this his Servant, and Pray
for all the Religious of his Order, that
he Example of their Founder may be
he Rule of their Lives, and that the
Diſciplin he Eſtabliſh'd, may be exact-
y preſerv'd amongſt them. Remem-
ber, Order and good Diſciplin is ne-
ceſſary, not only for Religious Houſes,
but likewiſe for all other Families; and
that where this is Neglected, there un-
avoidably follows a proportion'd de-
cay of Chriſtianity; ſo that, without
any ſort of Raſh Judgment, it may be
concluded, that thoſe Families, which
are not Orderly, are not Virtuous, at
leaſt, will not long be ſo. If thou haſt
the Care of a Family, conſider thy
Charge, and forget not, that the E-
ternal Welfare of as many as are under
thy Roof, very much depends on thy
Example and Management. But if
this be none of thy Portion, examin
how-

however how exactly thou complies with the Duties of thy State; and see thou make no Opposition against those who would reform Abuses, and bring things into better Discipline.

St. *Lea*, *March* 22.

A Holy Widow, whose Virtues are recorded by S. *Jerom*. Entring into a Monastery, she was chose Abbess, and by her Exemplar Piety promoted all good. She had now Sackcloth to succeed that Rich Attire, she had worn in her Conjugal State, and Haircloth to take the place of her Fine Linnen. The Nights formerly Wasted in Entertainments, she now employs in Prayer, and having been attended by many Servants, she is now the Servant of all. In this State of Penance and of Humility, without any mixture of Affectation, she liv'd till God call'd her to the Possession of what she had sought. It is now a time of Penance, proper for following such an Example; look upon thy Sins, and see, if Justice demands it not from thee; there will be Trouble in the Practice, but this is one of those Troubles, which will be

urn'd into Joy. Let this Example be always before thee. Take Neceſſity for thy Rule, and keeping thy Eye upon it, come as near it, as thou canſt. Let it be before thee at thy Table, in thy Cloathing, Sleeping and Divertiſements. Thou canſt not depart many degrees from it, but with the danger of Sin. To exceed in Sleep, is Sloth and Lazineſs, it has no great Horror in its Aſpect, but is the Forerunner of all Evils: To exceed or be Nice in Diet, is Self-love and Luxury: To exceed in Dreſs, is Pride and Injuſtice, in ſeeking Honor for what deſerves Contempt. Think of it ſeriouſly, taking thy Meaſures not from the World, but the Goſpel, and thou will ſoon find Reaſon to retrench. Ask Grace to follow the Dictates of ſuch Reaſon

---

St. *Victorianus*, and Two Brothers, 5. *Cent. March* 23.

THE Firſt was Proconſul of *Carthage* under *Hunneric* King of the *Wandals*, who ſtanding out againſt all the Solicitations of his Prince, inviting him

him to renounce his Faith, was by his Order put to Death. The others were Two Brothers, who, at the same time, being seiz'd, promis'd to be Companions in the same Torments and Death; which favor being desir'd of the Executioners, they were Hung up in the Air with heavy Weights at their Feet: Which one of them not supporting, desir'd to be releas'd; but being call'd upon by his Brother, and put in Mind of his Promise, he took New Courage, and offer'd himself to still greater Torments: Upon which they were Burnt with Plates of Iron, and Torn with Hooks, and thus finish'd their Martyrdom in the Fifth Century. What can I do, in seeing this Courage and Patience of the Martyrs, but be confounded within my self, and blush at the repeated Experience of my own Weakness; there being scarce any Difficulty so Inconsiderable, but what is above my Courage and Patience? O God, when wilt thou give me a better Spirit, such as may carry me thro' the Ordinary Trials of Life, that I may not thus daily be Worsted by Trifles, whilst others Triumph over the Severest Torments! O God, I bow down and acknowledge my Misery, but Hope, that

that thy Goodneſs, which ſtrengthn'd the Martyrs, will likewiſe be my ſupport.

St. *Simeon*, an Infant, *March* 24.

MUrther'd by the *Jews* in *Trent* in the Year 1473. upon *Good-Friday*, when to expreſs their Hatred to Chriſt, they took this Child of about Three Years Old, and having Strip'd him on a Table, Kill'd him with Needles, and Cutting his Fleſh into Pieces, Boil'd it for to Eat: Thus they triumph'd in their Revenge againſt the Chriſtian Name. But being betray'd by one, that was an Actor in this Cruelty, they had the Reward of their Wickedneſs; but what was left of the Child's Body, was carried with great Solemnity to the Church, and the Infant has been Honor'd with the Holy Innocents, who were Murther'd by *Herod*, God himſelf giving Authority to it, by many Miracles wrought at his Tomb. Chriſtians cannot but expreſs their Abhorrence of this *Jewiſh* Cruelty; but ſince the Church on the Day of this Fact offers her Prayers to God for the Con-

verſion of that People, their Blindneſs muſt not Extinguiſh, but Excite our Charity for them: And while we bewail them, we muſt not inſult, but with more ſenſible Tears lament our own Obſtinacy and Hardneſs of Heart, which has an Exaggeration beyond theirs; for we have it from S. *Paul*, that their Outrages againſt the Son of God, was the Effect of their not knowing him; but our Sins, by which, as the ſame Apoſtle ſays, we Crucifie again Jeſus Chriſt, are accompanied with a Belief in him: Let us then, this Day, frame a true Idea of our Sins, and while we deteſt the Blindneſs of the *Jews*, reſolve of never more joining in their Wickedneſs.

The Annunciation, *March* 25.

Iſa. 7. 10, 15. *Luke* 1. 26, 38.

1. THis being the Day, the Son of God became Incarnate, and took Fleſh of the Virgin *Mary*, give Thanks to Almighty God for this his Infinit Mercy, in ſending his only Son for the Redemption of Man.

2. Offer

2. Offer thy self for his Servant for ever, who for thy sake stoops below the degree of a Servant.

3. Admire and Honor the Humility of the B. Virgin, who being chosen Mother of Christ, stiles her self his Handmaid, and let her Example be thy Pattern.

The Mercy of this Day, when God sent his Only Son to become Man for our Salvation, ought to imprint such a lively Idea in the Hearts of all Christians, as to lay a Foundation of perpetual Praise, Adoration and Thanksgiving, and oblige them to be Faithful in his Service for ever. And to be wanting in these Duties is a sufficient Conviction, they either do not Think, or not Believe. For what can it be less than Insensibility, to behold this Goodness, and not adore it; to receive such Mercies from the Hand of God, and remain cold and ungrateful under them? An Eternal Homage and Fidelity are therefore the Indispensible Obligations of every Christian, and those who dispence with themselves, in Fact renounce this Character. And yet when I reflect, how generally Corrupt are the Lives of most Christians, so very contrary to what they ought to be, this

one Thought abates the Joy of this Feſtival, and obliges me to Celebrate it with Tears, ſince the greater the Mercies are, as on the one ſide, they commend the Divine Goodneſs, ſo on the other, they manifeſt our Unworthineſs, in being Obſtinate againſt them all. So that while I give Thanks to God for his Mercy, I cannot do it, but with a Sorrowful Heart, bewailing our Common Miſery, in ſo little Correſponding with the Divine Goodneſs, being neither ſoftn'd by his Fatherly Tenderneſs, nor oblig'd by his Favors, nor reclaim'd by his Bleſſings. And is it thus to go on for ever? Are we thus to live on Stupid and Unthinking, and be ſenſible of no other effect of theſe Mercies, but in our greater Condemnation, which we ſhall unhappily draw upon our ſelves by our Neglect, Ingratitude and Contempt? Something certainly ought to be done on our parts, while we ſee God do ſo much on his.

And what can we do better, than follow the Pattern before us? The Second Perſon of the Bleſſed Trinity this Day aſſumes our Human Nature, and and becomes Man; and by this ineffable Union of God and Man, has taught us, that Man may be United to God;

God; in this then ought to be the Concern of our whole Lives, to Extend in some manner the Incarnation of the Son of God; and as he is made Man, so we by putting on Christ, may be so closely United to him, as to become Divine. This Union is consummated in Heaven, where the Blessed Souls are wholly Absorpt in God; but it is begun, and may be very much advanc'd on Earth, whilst Christians being made the Adopted Children of God by a Participation of the Divine Nature, may subject themselves so fully to its powerful Influence, as to let that be the general Principle of their Life and Actions, so that, with the Apostle, they may be able to say; We live, and not we, but Christ lives in us. Happy those Christians, who arrive to this Point: And happy we, could we, this Day, effectually embrace the Method of coming to it.

This can be only done by our constant Endeavors of Crucifying in us the Old Man, with all its corrupt Inclinations and Desires, which carry us, with a sort of violence to Sin, to the Earth and Creatures; and of following those new impressions we receive from God, which separating us from all terrene Af-

fections, raise us to the Love of God, and the seeking heavenly things. This is taking part with Christ, who coming to remedy the most dismal Effects of *Adam*'s Fall, teaches his Followers to Renounce and make War against all that Concupiscence, Pride and Perverseness, which they inherit from the Sin of *Adam*; for since Christ, and the Life he gives, is contrary to *Adam*, and to the impressions received from him, 'tis evident, those Christians, who putting on the New Man, have the Spirit of Christ abiding in them, must manifest this New Life, by stifling all sinful Inclinations, and bringing forth the Fruits of his Holy Spirit. In this manner Christ being the Light, which directs their Judgment and Reason; he being the Rule, by which they govern their Affections and Will, and from him taking the Measures of whatever they undertake and do, it is truly verify'd, that Christ lives in them, and their Life becomes the Life of Christ: And tho' at the same time, they are sensible of many corrupt Inclinations and natural Suggestions, in favor of Flesh and the World; yet inasmuch as they carefully watch over these, and with all their power ever labor to suppress them,

them, these only serve for their Exercise, and daily afford them new Matter of Triumph; but it cannot be truly said, that they live by them, but rather, that they are dead to the World, and have crucify'd their Flesh with its Vices and Lusts.

This Method all Christians, in this Festival, are oblig'd to undertake; and 'tis the only Return they can make to Christ for what he does for them; for since he becomes Man, that so he may overcome the Devil, the World, and Sin for Man; they cannot be Christians, but by espousing the same Cause with him, and making War under his Standard. And since he engages both Life and Blood for gaining the Victory, they are not to be discourag'd with Labors or Difficulties, but even venture all for the Cause they have undertaken. And this being not possible to Human Nature of it self, but only thro' Christ; hence are they brought to the necessity either of putting on Christ, or of being overcome. For if they are not thus united to Christ, they can expect no blessing of God for their assistance; he having decreed from all Eternity, to grant nothing to Men, but in his Son, and for the Love of him. Jesus Christ

is that Seed of *Abraham*, in which all Generations shall be Blessed; such therefore, in whom Jesus Christ dwells not, cannot have an Effectual Part in this Promise, and consequently are depriv'd of the Principle of all Blessings, which is the Life of Grace. For Christ being the only Object, in which God is well pleas'd, they can no otherwise expect the Favors of Heaven, but as they are in him, and he in them. So that in him being the Fountain of Grace, it is from him this spreads it self, and flows into all the Body, that is United to him; and if it reaches to others, it is in order to give them Life, and make them Living Members of his Body, and because, in his Comprehensive Knowledge, he he sees them belonging to it.

Upon this Principle are Christians oblig'd to answer the Mercy of this Day, by opening their Hearts to Christ, and giving them for his Abode, to satisfie the Duty of Christians, and accomplish that part of the Work, he has left for them to do. And the best Proof they can give of being possess'd with him, is their living by his Example, and manifesting his Life in them. For Christ being always the same, and never contrary to himself, if he has his abode

in

in their Souls, he will act in them always conformable to what, we know, he did in himself, and never contrary to it. And therefore since he always sought the Glory of his Father in all things, ever submitted to his Holy Will; since his Spirit was the Spirit of Charity, of Humility, of Meekness, of Obedience, of Purity, of Peace, of Suffering, of Perseverance, of Dying to the World and Sin, &c. if he be in them, he will effectually carry them on in the same Holy Method; and this Life will give Testimony of his Spirit residing in them, and that truly they live by him. But if their Lives be quite opposite to the Gospel and to the Life of Christ; if Pride, Ambition and Luxury, if seeking themselves and this World, be at the root of all they do; if they trample on the Laws of God, and make these give way to their Pleasure or Interest; by whatever Title, Character or Profession they are known and distinguish'd, 'tis evident Christ is not in them, and that they live not by his Spirit: For tho' there be a sort of mixture in the Lives of the best of Christians, and God permits, in this imperfect State, many Weaknesses, to

them Humble and Watchful, and make them ever mindful of their dependance on him; yet the main Body of their Actions is always regulated by his Law; and their perpetual Solicitude not to transgress it, join'd with an effectual Care for the recovery of Grace, on the apprehension of having lost it, is a very Satisfactory Proof of Christ abiding in them; and where this is not the state and disposition of Soul, there's but too just grounds to conclude, that there is wanting one Essential Part of a Christian; and that while they pretend to Honor God made Man for our Redemption, and take no Care to be united to him, and live by him, they wholly deprive themselves of his Mercy, and are in evident danger of having their Temporal Separation from him become Eternal. It can be only thy Grace, O God, can prevent this Misfortune; help us therefore in this Day of Mercy; and thou, O Jesus, who comest to save that which was lost, be now the Advocate for all Sinners; open their Eyes, that they may see thy Infinit Goodness, and their own Misery; touch their Hearts so powerfully, that they may renounce their evil Ways and follow thine, and let none perish, who have

have in thee so plentiful a Redemption

St. *Ludgerus*, *March* 26.

HAving been a Disciple for some Years of the Famous *Alcuinus* in *England*, he return'd to his Country and Preach'd in *Frisia*, in which his Zeal and Virtue were so Remarkable, that by the Importunity of the Emperor *Charlemain*, he was Consecrated Bishop of *Munster*, where his Labors were bless'd with so great Fruit, that he is call'd the Apostle of that Province, and of the *Saxons*. His Zeal was wonderful in not Conniving at, but Reproving the Crimes of Persons of Quality; his Example was great in Mortification, Fasting and Watching, but particularly in Praying; of which he gave Two Remarkable Instances: One in imposing a Severe Penance on one of his Clergy, who saying Matins with the Bishop, interrupted his Office for composing a Fire of Coals, which by its Smoke disturb'd the whole Company: The other, in not quiting his Prayers, when

when sent for by the Emperor, till he had finish'd them. Having Signalized himself in satisfying the Offices of a Good Pastor, he Died at *Munster* in the Ninth Century. Pray for all Prelates in God's Church, that they may fully answer all the Duties of their Charge. And, for thy self, having reflected on the usual Distractions of thy Prayers, on thy Irreverence and Neglect; how easily they are put by for Trifles, how frequently interrupted in Compliance with every Impertinent Thought, beg hearty Pardon, and resolve on a better Method.

St. *John* of *Egypt*, *March* 27.

A Holy Ermit of *Egypt* in the Fourth Century, reverenc'd by all of his time, and particularly by the Great *Theodosius*, to whom he foretold his Victory over *Eugenius*. He never Eat Bread, or any thing prepar'd by Fire; his only Food was on the Fruits of the Earth, which he touch'd not till Sun-set. He was shut up all the Week in his Cell, without seeing or speaking to any Body;

dy; and on *Sundays* he open'd a little Window, and ſpoke to ſuch as came for his Inſtruction. From Thirty to Ninety Years he liv'd in this Method, without ſeeing any one Woman; and at that Age left his Cell for a better Life. Thou canſt more eaſily admire the Saints, than imitate them; but ought not his Example be ſome direction for this time, as to Recollection and Faſting? Canſt thou Cut off nothing of thy uſual Diſſipations; ſo to apply thy Mind to a ſerious Examination of thy State, and to the Means neceſſary for thy Amendment? Canſt thou Faſt no otherwiſe than hitherto? An ill Cuſtom ſtands in thy way: Thy uſual Exceſs and Niceneſs in Diet call upon thee, and to ſatisfie them, thou muſt be provided with what becomes not the Time, and inſtead of ſparing for the Poor, makeſt thy Table more chargeable. What is the Reaſon, but a continued Riot and Luxury? From theſe thou haſt thy Diſpenſations; but how far will they be allow'd? Uſe Violence, and do better.

SS. *Priſcus, Malchus* and *Alexander, March* 28.

IN the time of *Valerian*, when the Severity of Perſecution, carried the Weak into the Deſart, and Cut off Infinit Numbers, of thoſe, who thought not fit to Retire; theſe Three Saints having found a Shelter againſt the common Danger, prais'd God for their Peace, and for all the Glorious Triumphs of the Martyrs. But at length Reproaching themſelves of Cowardice, in lying ſtill, while ſo many were engag'd in Battel, they went to *Ceſarea*, and going to the Prefect, inform'd him of the true Cauſe of their coming; that being Chriſtians they deſir'd to take part in the Sufferings and Glory of their Brethren; upon which they were ſeiz'd, and after many Torments, being expos'd to Wild Beaſts, they finiſh'd a Glorious Martyrdom. What canſt thou ſay amidſt ſo many Examples of Chriſtian Generoſity and Courage? So many Fighting for Heaven, Renouncing the World and themſelves, and with Joy giving their Lives for Chriſt; and thou lying ſtill amidſt Soft-

Softness and Delight, Courting thy Senses, Appetite and Inclination, with all that pleases, and as much in Love with Earth, as if that were to be thy Heaven. Think in earnest; will this do? Will the Love of the World and thy self bring thee to Heaven? Has not Christ commanded thee to deny thy self, and to renounce all that is Earthly? Give ear to him, and believe him, and let neither Example or Authority of others perswade thee, that there is Security in any other Way, besides that, which he teaches.

St. *Armogastus*, 5. Cent. *March* 29.

A Noble Man in *Africa*, who in the Persecution of the *Wandals* was apprehended, and being put to Torments, seem'd so desirous of Martyrdom, that the Malice of his Enemies repriev'd him from the Sentence of Death pronounc'd against him, that he might have a longer Martyrdom; upon which he was condemn'd to Work in the Mines, and afterwards, for more Public Ignominy, to keep Cows in a Place near *Carthage*, where he was exposed

pos'd to the Eyes of all. This was no Confusion to him, who knew how to Glory in being Dishonor'd by Men, for the Interest of Truth, and of God. Learn from this Holy Man the Spirit of Christianity, which is not to be pleas'd with the esteem of Men, but rather in being contemn'd by them. 'Tis Pride and Self-love make us Solicitous to please, and give Disquiet upon the Apprehension of Contempt; and according to the degree of this Solicitude and Disquiet, may be taken the Truest Measures of a Prevailing Pride, and of Self-love not subdued. Let this be thy daily Observation, and accordingly use daily Endeavors for overcoming that, which must be overcome: For till thou hast gain'd this Point, of placing thy Satisfaction in doing thy Duty, whether it pleases others, or displeases, and canst think thy self Happy in such Accidents, which bring Abjection with them, and Disesteem, as being justly due to thy Unworthiness, and thy State of Sin, thou hast not the Spirit of the Gospel, nor any degree of that Humility, which Christ has taught thee. Pray therefore, and Labor every Day to obtain it.

St.

St. *John Climacus*, *March* 30.

HE was Born in the beginning of the Sixth Century, and at the Age of Sixteen renounc'd the World to undertake a Monastic Life on *Mount Sinai*, under the Conduct of a Holy Hermit, to whom he was so wholly subject, that he seem'd to have no Will of his own, but to be wholly Dead to himself. His desire was to be unknown to Men, and therefore liv'd Forty Years in this Solitude, fervent in Prayer, industrious in Working and Writing, mortified in his Diet, sparing in his Sleep. His Virtues being at length discover'd, he was known to many, amongst whom were some, whose Envy cast upon him the Blemish of Idleness and Ignorance; but these he overcame by his Moderation and Patience, and brought them into the Number of his Admirers and Disciples. In his Old Age he was chose Head of all the Holy Inhabitants of *Mount Sinai*, and being Consummate in Virtue, Died in this Charge an Example to all. If thou canst not leave the World, thou must learn, at least, to leave thy own Will:

All

All thy Trouble and Misfortune of Sin must be dated from thy Wilfulness, Obstinacy and Positiveness; and till thou hast obtain'd the Art of Submitting thy Will to the Orders of Providence, of Yielding with Peace under the Pride and Violence of Men, thou must expect no Calm, that is true and lasting. Thou must die to thy own Will, if thou desir'st to live to the Will of God. This will preserve thy Peace amidst the Calumnies and Malice of the World, much better than Remonstrances of Passion, or any kind of disguis'd Revenge. But this will never be their Method, who love Idleness, indulge Sleep and Appetite: Begin then here thy Reformation, if thou desir'st this Spirit to have the Command of thy Soul.

St. *Benjamin*, 5. Cent. *March* 31.

DEacon of *Persia*, who in the Persecution mention'd by St. *Augustin* in his *City* of God, being cast into Prison and, after a Year, releas'd, with the Charge, of Preaching no more the Faith of Christ; was again apprehended for perform-

performing this Charity, and having his Bowels, with Cruelty, Ript up, and Torn with Iron, he Died in this Torment. Reasons are easily found for dispensing with such Duties, as are Troublesome; and 'tis by these Reasons Tepid Souls are govern'd, when thro' an Absurd Nicety they are more affraid of what will give them a short Uneasiness or Trouble, than of running into Hell. This is not the Method of the Martyrs, who living by Faith, knew no other Evils, but such as are Eternal; and for escaping these, cheerfully offer'd themselves to such Sufferings, as threatn'd nothing beyond this Life. Pray thou for a better Sense of their Principles, and be not so Fond of present Ease, as to run the Hazard of Everlasting Torments: If thou art affraid of Suffering, fear that which is Eternal; let Self-love for once teach thee to be so Wise, as to chuse the lesser Evil.

It being the last Day of the Month, endeavor to put a good end to it, by a hearty Thanksgiving for all Blessings, Preservations, and for all thy Afflictions too, and by a Sincere Contrition for all thy Offences, for thy Sins of Ignorance, for thy Hidden and Unknown Sins.

Sins. Resolve upon Amendment, and beg for Grace, that it may be effectual.

APRIL.

St. *Mary* of *Egypt*.

April 1.

BOrn in *Egypt*, and having left her Father's House at the Age of Twelve Years, went to *Alexandria*, where she abandon'd her self to all the Liberties of a Sinful Life: But within a few Years being touch'd by a wonderful Hand of God, she resolv'd upon a New Life, and doing Penance for her Sins, and for this End retir'd into the Desart beyond *Jordan* with Three Loaves, and liv'd there in Prayer and Penance Seven and Forty Years, without seeing any Person in all that Time. But then was discover'd by *Zozimus* an Hermit, to whom she gave an Account of her Life; and having desir'd him to return to the same Place, the following Year on *Maun-Thursday* with the Holy

Viaticum, she then receiv'd it from his Hands, and after Two Days Died in the Sixth Century. Pray for all those unhappy Souls, who live in Sin, that they may hear the Voice of God, who invites them to Repentance. Let the Mercy shew'd to this Sinner Arm thee against Despair: But then let her Penance instruct thee, what thou art to do upon thy Change of Life: For if ill Habits are strong, they will scarce yield to Resolutions, without the Concurrence of some more Penitential Method. There will be a Necessity of such a Solitude, at least, as separates thee from the usual Occasions of Sin, and gives thee Opportunity of Recollection.

On this First Day of the Month, make a Sincere Oblation of thy self and all thine to God; put all under his Conduct and Direction, beg his Blessing on all thy Undertakings, and offer thy self to whatever Disappointments and Troubles his Providence has ordain'd for thee; beseeching him to assist thee with his Grace, that thou may'st make a right use both of his Favors and Scourges. Take a review of thy past Errors and evil Habits, and let them not be endless, which thou every Month resolvest to amend. One Month is to be thy last,

laſt, who knows but it may be this Do now, at leaſt, as if it were to b ſo.

St. *Francis de Paula*, *April* 2.

Phil. 3. 7, 12. *Luke* 12. 32. 34.

FRom his Youth he ſeem'd inflam'd with the Fire of the Holy Spirit; for retiring into a Deſart, he ſpent ſix Years in a courſe of great Auſterity, accompanied with almoſt continual Prayer and Divine Contemplation. Pray for all Perſons of both Sexes, eſpecially thoſe, who are yet in their youthful Years, that God would diminiſh in them that exceſſive Fondneſs of the World and themſelves, and give them a true Senſe of their Eternal State, that they may not admire and adore Vanity, but only God alone And if any are under thy Care, reflect on thy Obligation both to God and them. See, they want no inſtruction, keep them to their Hours of Praying and Reading, teach them to employ themſelves, oblige them to Order and Diſcipline, examin their Company and Con-

Converſation, ſtudy to make them Eaſy in a Regular Life, allow them their Diverſions, encourage them in whatever is Decent; but ſee, they be not fond of what is Vain, Extravagant and Fooliſh: By theſe degrees, thou may'ſt teach them to love God, to have a true eſteem for Virtue, and live as becomes Chriſtians, tho' they leave not the World. And by following a contrary Method, in giving them the liberty of gratifying the Inclinations of a Corrupt Nature in every thing, which, in their favor may be hop'd to be Innocent, thou wilt inſenſibly concurr to their Ruin, and too late find their flatter'd Innocence to end in profeſs'd Vice.

2. Being prevail'd on to leave his Solitude, for the Encouragement of many Pious Souls, who deſir'd to follow his Example, he procur'd a Church to be Built near *Paula* in *Calabria*, the Place of his Birth, and there laid the firſt Foundation of a Religious Order, obliging his Followers to obſerve Perpetual Abſtinence, to go Bare-foot, to lye on the Ground; and that they might be ever mindful of that true Humility, which above all he recommended to them, as the ground of all Chri-

Christian Virtues, he call'd them *Minims*, that is, the Least and most Contemptible of all the Servants of God. In this Method he liv'd to the Ninety-first Year of his Age, and made a Happy Conclusion in the Year 1507. Pray for all of this Holy Order, that they may truly be what they profess, that they may keep up the Spirit of their Founder, and be an Example to all others of the true Spirit of the Gospel. Learn something of it for thy self; the Corruption of thy Nature can have no better Remedy, than in a discreet Abstinence from such things as are too favorable to it, in being either Vicious, or disposing that way. Thou art to consider thy self as one Sick, longing after many things, that are hurtful to thee; if thou learnest not to deny thy Inclinations, will not the Distemper increase, and put thee in hazard of perishing in thy own Corruption? Practise his Humility too, for tho' thou art not oblig'd to follow him in Habit, yet except, like him, thou art truly Humble and Poor in Spirit, thou canst not be a true Disciple. Pride has many subtle ways besides those, that are commonly reputed so, and lying under many Folds, requires thy best observation

to

to discover it, and yet greater Care to overcome it. Study all its ways, and by Prayers call in Heaven to thy Assistance, and never think thou hast done, till thou hast learnt never to contemn others, and judgest thy self the Least, and most Contemptible of all.

St. *Richard*, *April* 3.

He was Bishop of *Chichester* about the Year 1250. and Eminent for his great Virtue and Austerity of Life. Pray for the Prelates and Pastors of the Church, and in particular of this Nation; that they may be every way accomplish'd for their Charge. Pray for the People too, that Peace and Charity may be Establish'd amongst them, that they may be united in one Faith, and live according to the Gospel.

It being also the Day of St. *Ulpianus*, a young man of *Tyre*, who in the Persecution of *Maximian*, in the Third Century, expressing signs of Joy under the Torment of Racks, and the Tearing of his Flesh, so provok'd the Tyrant, that he order'd him to be shut up in a Vessel of Leather, together with a Monkey,

an Adder, and a Dog, and thrown into the Sea; where he ſhould be toſs'd by the Waves, and thus provoke the Fury and Hunger of thoſe Beaſts: In which manner he finiſh'd a Glorious Sacrifice. This joyful Submiſſion of the Martyrs to ſuch Deaths, which we cannot think of without horror, is ſuch a reproach to our Patience, which is ſo eaſily tir'd, and ſo often worſted, that we have reaſon to lament our Weakneſs, and not let this Day paſs without Tears, not for their Sufferings, but for our being ſo very much unprepar'd for ſuffering like them. I beſeech thee, O God, ſhew Mercy to me thy unworthy Servant, that while I ſo often ſee the Courage of thy Martyrs, I may give no Reſt to my Soul, till I have obtain'd ſome degree of their Spirit.

St. *Zozimus*, *April* 4.

AN *Anchoret* of the Sixth Century, who having liv'd three and fifty Years in great Sanctity, was ſeverely tempted with the Vanity of thinking none more perfect than himſelf; but God having regard to his paſt Labors, preven-

prevented the Miſchiefs of this ſecret Pride, by inſpiring him with thoughts of changing his abode, and going into a Deſart beyond *Jordan*. Where being arriv'd, he had not been there above twenty Days, when at Noon, in ſaying his ſixth Hour, he ſaw at a diſtance ſomething move like a Human Body, and making up to it, it retir'd amongſt the thickeſt of the Wood; but concluding it to be ſome Servant of God, by loud Cries he conjur'd the Perſon to permit him to approach, and coming up, he found it to be St. *Mary* of *Egypt*, from whom having heard the whole account of her Penitential Life, he ſaw how much he came ſhort of her, and that this was the Effect of the Divine Mercy for ſuppreſſing his Pride. If this Vanity put ſuch tried Virtue in danger, haſt not thou reaſon to be apprehenſive of the leaſt approach of it? Be watchful then againſt all Thoughts, which give thee Preference, or bring others under Contempt: Such Thoughts may ſeem back'd with good Reaſons; but being better examin'd, they are generally Raſh of thy Neighbor, in judging him upon very imperfect Informations, and deceitful as to thy ſelf, in not diſcerning the great

mixture there is of Evil, in whatever Advantages thou discover'st. Be but mindful of thy great Weakness, and many Sins, and thou wilt never have Reason to be Proud.

St. *Vincentius Ferrerius*, *April* 5.

Eccles 31.8, 11. *Luke* 12. 35, 40.

A Priest of the Order of St *Dominick*, of a very mortified Life, never eating Flesh, nor wearing Linnen: His whole Employment was in Preaching the Gospel, in Converting Jews and Infidels to the Christian Faith, and Sinners to a Holy Life; never omitting any Day, wherein he gave not Instructions to those that were assembled at Prayers with him; and being at length worn out with Labour and Age, he ended his Preaching and Life together in the Year 1419. Pray for all of his Character and Function, that they may partake of his Spirit and Zeal, that they may faithfully labor in the Vineyard, and not permit Ignorance and Vice to spread, thro' their Silence or Neglect. Pray likewise thou may'st do thy part, in giving good Example to all: A Ho-

ly

ly Life is a continual Sermon, by which thou may'ſt draw others from Error and Vice, and make a much better defence of the Truth, than by hot diſputing: And remember, an ill Life is a Confutation of all thy pretended Zeal, 'tis the greateſt Injury thou canſt do to Truth, which ſuffers more from thy Living, than others Diſputing againſt it.

St. *Marcellinus*, *April* 6.

SEcretary of State to *Honorius*, and for his great Virtue commended by St. *Auguſtin*, and St. *Jerom*. Being Commiſſion'd by the Emperor to decide the Controverſie between the Catholics and Donatiſts in *Africa*, without regarding the Power or Threats of theſe latter, he gave the Cauſe againſt them; by which they were ſo exaſperated, that they reſolv'd his Death; and haing rais'd the Jealouſie of an Eminent Courtier againſt him, under the Countenance of his Orders they Murther'd him. He was much Lamented by the Emperor, and the Church has honor'd the Memory of his Sufferings. Be but ſted-

dy to the Cauſe of Juſtice and Truth, and thou wilt need no other Perſecution for the Trial of thy Courage. Seek to be Juſt on all Occaſions, never flattering what deſerves Reproof, nor permitting Affection or Diſlike to carry thee againſt Duty. Examin the Working of thy Thoughts, the Cenſures of thy Judgment, and ſee, that a haſty concluſion of Evidence, where there is none, does not bring thee under the guilt of Raſhneſs. Keep a watch upon thy Lips, and ſpeak not in diſfavor of others, upon common Reports or Hearſays; for there is ſo much of Miſtake, if not worſe, in theſe, that ordinary Obſervation muſt ſuſpect them for inſufficient Arguments of Truth. Be nice in obſerving thy uſual Severity, in putting the worſt Conſtruction on what ſome do, and thy more favorable Interpretation in regard of others, and ſee, whether Paſſion be not at the bottom of this Partiality. If theſe Points are not a part of thy daily Care, thou canſt not hope to be Juſt.

St. *Aphra*

St. *Aphraates*, *April* 7.

BOrn in *Perſia*, of Infidel Parents, but becoming Chriſtian he came to *Edeſſa*, and in a little Grot, near that Place, began a Solitary Life, in the Practice of Faſting and Prayer, by which he gain'd the Eſteem of that part of the World. But being inform'd of the great Diſtreſs of the Catholics in *Antioch*, by the Oppreſſion of *Valens*, an *Arian* Emperor, who had baniſh'd their Biſhops and Prieſts, and forbid their Aſſemblies, he quitted his Solitude, and by Preaching and Inſtruction in thoſe difficult Times, ſupported the Flock in the Abſence of their Paſtor; and Peace being reſtor'd to the Church by the Death of the Emperor, he return'd to his Solitude, and there waited till God ca'll'd him into the Company of the Bleſſed. The Exerciſes of Prayer and Faſting are moſt Commendable; but if thou art bent with ſo much eagerneſs on any Method thou haſt propos'd, that thou canſt not bear an Interruption or Delay, without Peeviſh Reſentments, there's Reaſon to ſuſpect thee of too much Poſitiveneſs, and of a Will

not yet subdued. Chuse rather with more freedom of Spirit, to turn any Way, and answer all Occasions, where-ever God seems to call thee; and tho' this may prove some Abatement to Prayer; yet, believe me, in thus Following God, thou may'st as surely possess him, as by more quiet Prayer.

St. *Edesius*, *April* 8.

BOrn in *Lycia*, but coming to *Alexandria*, when the Cruelty of *Maximian Galerius* had wash'd the Streets of that City with the Blood of Christians, he waited not to be seiz'd by Officers, but going up to the Judge, reproach'd him with his Barbarous Usage of the Christians: Upon which he was put to the Worst of Torments, and then thrown into the Sea. Does not this Bravery of the Primitive Christians inspire thee with some Generous Thoughts of Offering thy self a Sacrifice to God? Thou hast Opportunity of doing this, in all thou suffer'st, whether in Mind or Body; whether from God or Man. And if a Total Peace, at any time, takes this out of thy Hands, thou hast thy La-

Labors ſtill to offer to him, as likewiſe the frequent Contradictions of thy Will, in forcing it to ſubmit to the Will of God. Thou haſt again the Difficulties of thy State to ſtruggle with, and the Trouble caus'd by thy inward Corruption, which will not eaſily be overcome. If thou art Faithful in theſe Occaſions, it is in thy Power to make thy Life an acceptable Sacrifice to Heaven, by giving it every Hour to God. Let not then Sloth hinder the Offering of thy Labors, nor Impatience take thy Sufferings from the Altar, nor Self-love cut off the Self-denials: For this is unworthy of thy Calling, who art a Member of the Head Chriſt Jeſus, and Fellow-member of the Martyrs.

St. *Acacius*, *April* 9.

A Holy Biſhop in *Meſopotamia*, who ſeeing the great Diſtreſs of many Thouſand *Perſians*, who had been taken Priſoners by *Theodoſius* the Younger, and were ſo Neglected, as to periſh with Hunger, ſummon'd his Clergy, and having repreſented this great Object of Charity, obtain'd their Conſent

for Selling the Veſſels of Gold and Silver belonging to the Church for their preſent Relief, and to ſet them at Liberty. Which when the King of *Perſia* had heard, mov'd by this Charity perform'd by Chriſtians, whom he had perſecuted throughout his Kingdom with ſo much Cruelty, he recall'd his Edicts, and gave Peace to the Church. This was the Practice of that Charity recommended by S. *Paul*; *If thy Enemy be Hungry, give him to Eat, and if he Thirſts, give him Drink*; and 'tis the beſt thou canſt perform, for removing the Scourge of God from thy ſelf, from thy Family and Nation, and for making thy Peace with God in the Pardon of thy Sins. Let not then the Malice of others ſhut up thy Bowels of Compaſſion againſt them; but help them for God's ſake, and thy own, altho' they deſerve it not. 'Tis very ill Management, either to Lock up, or to Magnifie thy State with that, which if thus employ'd in the Relief of the Poor, might open Heaven to thee. O God, how little do they underſtand thy Goſpel, who are more Solicitous to ſet forth Cloſets and Shelves, and to enrich their Tables, Walls and Carcaſſes, than to feed thee in thy Poor! Will not that be their

Anguiſh

Anguish at the Hour of Death, which is now their Satisfaction? Rob thy Walls to Cloath the Naked; Starve thy Vanity to Feed the Hungry: This will be thy better Treasure, and thy Eternal Comfort.

St. *Apollonius*, *April* 10.

AN *Anchoret*, who being inform'd of the Cruel Persecution of the Christians at *Alexandria* under *Maximin*, left his Solitude, to Visit and Encourage those that suffer'd: Upon which he was cast into Prison, having none permitted to see him, but Heathens, who came to Mock and Insult over him; amongst whom the most Violent was one *Philemon*, a Famous *Comedian*, who hearing no other return made by *Apollonius* to all his Execrations, than this; I pray God Pardon thee, my Son, and lay none of these Injuries to thy Charge; was so sensibly touch'd, that he forthwith cried out, I am a Christian; and being order'd to be Burnt with *Apollonius*, the Fire sparing them, they were cast into the Sea, with others, who had likewise receiv'd the Faith. See here

here the Force of Patience and Meekneſs; theſe are the Arms, which the Goſpel puts into thy Hands: Fight with theſe, if thou haſt Enemies to overcome, for they are more Powerful than Paſſion and Violence. To be more Expert, practice daily in ordinary Occaſions; accuſtom not thy ſelf to Anger, or Peeviſh Reſentments; be not Noiſie and Loud; but with a Generous Softneſs ſtand thy Ground; thus thou wilt poſſeſs thy own Soul, and gain thy Enemies.

St. *Leo, April* 11.

Eccluſ 44, and 45. *Mat.* 16. 13, 19.

HE was Biſhop of *Rome*, and ſo Eminent for Sanctity, that the very Infidels had a reſpect for him, it being in favor of him, that *Attilas* and *Genſerius* ſpared that City, who brought Deſtruction whereever they went. It was likewiſe this Holy Prelate, who aſſembled the Fourth General Council at *Chalcedon*, *An.* 451. in which were Condemn'd the Errors of *Eutyches* and *Neſtorius*: And having for Twenty Years in that See labor'd

labor'd for the Encouragement of Religion and Virtue, he made a happy End. Pray for the Present Bishop of that City, that God would direct and assist him in all the difficulties of his Charge; that by his Zeal, all Abuses may be remov'd, which carry Destruction with them, and may truly be stil'd like *Attilas, Flagellum Dei: The Scourge of God.* Pray, that his Care may be to Establish Peace and Truth amongst Christians. And Pray for thy self, that neither by an Obstinate Adhesion to Private Opinions, nor by Encouraging Vice, thou may'st give disturbance either to Virtue or Truth; 'tis the whole Body suffers in the Corruption of every Member: Be not so unnatural as to gnaw at the Bowels of thy Mother: She may be injur'd, but 'tis thou wilt perish.

St *Sabas*, 4. Cent. *April* 12.

A *Goth* by Nation, but his Rule was the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which he follow'd so strictly, that by his Charity he kept Peace with all; he was Humble amidst a World of Admirers, ever ready to serve and help all; he esteem'd Silver as Contemptible Earth,

Earth. never providing beyond abſolute Neceſſity; he declin'd whatever belong'd not to him, and could only ſerve as a Diſſipation: He avoided all Viſits and Entertainments, that ſo his Prayers might have leſs Interruption. Being apprehended for his Faith, he was dragg'd thro' Thorns, and Cruelly Beaten; and being Sentenc'd to be Caſt into the River; he cheerfully went before the Officers, beſeeching God to have Mercy on his Judge, that he might not be loſt eternally, who had put him into ſuch a Compendious Way to Heaven; he bleſs'd God, and ſurpriz'd at his Goodneſs, went on admiring, that he ſhould be call'd to this Glory, who was ſo unworthy. Here is a Diſpoſition of Soul thou haſt Reaſon to ask of God, that when Death approaches, it may not be thy Anguiſh, but thy Joy: And ought not that to be thy Joy, which puts an end to thy Baniſhment, and opens thee a Way to thy God? It will be ſo, if thou loveſt God. But for this, prepare thy Soul by the Method of this Saint. Keep Peace with all, renounce Pride, love not Money, decline unprofitable Converſation, let thy Rule be to ſupply Neceſſity. Thus if thou fenceſt thy Heart againſt the World,

World, the Love of God will take place, and this will make Death more a Mercy than Punishment.

St. *Hermenegildus*, *April* 13.

Wisd. 10. 10, 14. *Luke* 14. 26, 33.

BEing Converted from the *Arian* Heresie to the Catholic Faith, his Father *Leovigildus*, King of the *Visigoths*, and an *Arian*, was so Exasperated against him, that he cast him into Prison, and loaded him with Chains; where perceiving all his Cruelty to be fruitless, on *Easter-Eve*, for his refusing to Receive the Communion from an *Arian* Bishop, he order'd him to be Murther'd. Some time after, being sensible of his Error, and his Crime, he acknowledg'd the Truth of the Catholic Faith, tho' over-aw'd by his People, he had never Courage to profess it. And so he Dy'd, having first recommended his Son *Reccaredus* to the Care of an Orthodox Bishop, by whose Means being reclaim'd from *Arianism*, he became the Happy Instrument of the Conversion of the whole Nation of *Spain* in the Sixth Century.

1. Learn

1. Learn what thy Duty is, when for the ſake of Truth, thy Parents and Deareſt Friends become thy greateſt Enemies: Chriſt and his Faith are to be preferr'd to them all; and thou canſt not be a True Diſciple, but on theſe hard Terms, of forſaking them, and abandoning thy ſelf to their Diſpleaſure and Cruelty; this Martyr, in contemning a Crown, has taught thee to deſpiſe all worldly Convenience for the ſake of Chriſt: 'Tis the Command of the Goſpel, and the Way to Heaven. Pray, that this may be thy Rule, whenever thou ſhalt be brought into theſe Streights; that thou may'ſt ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God, and its Juſtice, and make all other Conſiderations of Fleſh and Blood give way to this. Pray likewiſe for all thoſe, who at preſent are under this Trial; 'tis a Work of great difficulty, and requires a very powerful help of Grace, to renounce all the ſenſible Comforts of Tender Parents, and the Hopes of this World, for the ſake of Truth, which works only by Faith, and has its Rewards at a diſtance. Let them have therefore the Aſſiſtance of thy Charity.

2. Pray for the Reclaiming all thoſe, how are Abettors of the *Arian*, *Socinian*, or

or whatever other Errors; and beg, that none may be obſtinate againſt that Light, which God gives them, or neglect to follow it, thro' Fear, or other Human Reſpects. The Thoughts of what the World will ſay, and the difficulty of Changing, are Temptations, that give a Check to the Light of Heaven, diſcourage many from following it, and are only to be overcome by thy Grace, O God. Make theſe therefore ſenſible, we beſeech thee, that there's nothing more Honorable to a Chriſtian, than Juſtice and Truth; and that, as to change from Sin to a Life of Virtue is an indiſpenſible Duty, ſo 'tis likewiſe to change from Error to Truth. 'Tis the Effect of a particular Mercy to diſcover Truth to us; and 'tis a yet greater, to give us Strength to embrace it; and can there be any diſgrace in opening our Hearts to the greateſt of thy Mercies? Have Mercy on thoſe, who by this Deluſion are kept at a diſtance from thee.

SS. *Tiburtius*, *Valerianus* and *Maximus*, *April* 14.

Wisd. 5. 1, 5. *Jo.* 15. 1, 7.

Valerianus being Espous'd to St. *Cecily*, by her perswasions embrac'd the Christian Faith, and was Baptiz'd by St. *Urban*, Pope, together with *Tiburtius* his Brother. And now changing their Lives with their Faith, they employ'd their Substance in the Relief of the Poor, and their Time in rescuing the Bodies of such as were Martyr'd, from the Contempt and Fury of the Heathens, and giving them decent Burial. For which Charitable Offices being Accus'd, and having made a Noble Defence of their Faith in the Public Confession of the Name of Jesus, and Detestation of the Idols, they were first Scourg'd, and afterwards Beheaded. And so wonderful an Effect had their Constancy, Resolution and Patience, on the Mind of *Maximus* one of the Officers, who had led them to Execution, that he declar'd himself Christian; and soon after, with several others of his Companions, receiv'd the Crown of Martyrdom.

1. Pray for all those, who suffer for their Faith, or labor under any Oppression or Trouble, that God would give them Courage and Patience, and support them against all Dejection of Spirit, and teach them to make a right use of all their Sufferings. Put up the same Prayer for thy self.

2. Pray for all those, who embrace the True Faith, that with it they may begin a New Life, follow the Rules of the Gospel, and by their good Example contribute to the Salvation of others.

3. Pray for those, whose Quality and Estates set them in a Rank above their Neighbors, that they may make a Christian use of all their Blessings, that neither by Prodigality or Hardheartedness they may rob their own Souls or the Poor; but by their Moderation give good Example, and by their Charity learn to lay up Treasures in Heaven.

4. Pray for those, who seem most Obstinate against Truth, for thy Oppressors and Persecutors: Remember to despair of none, since thou seest those, who lead others to Execution, may come to lay down their Necks on the same Block: Thy Virtue and Patience may be a help to this.

SS. *Baſiliſſa* and *Anaſtaſia*, *April* 15.

SOme of the firſt of this Sex, who ſuffer'd Martydom, being Diſciples to the Apoſtles; their Spirit was according to the Goſpel, in relieving thoſe, who ſuffer'd by the Cruelty of *Nero*, and Comforting ſuch as were oblig'd to retire. Being ſeiz'd by the Emperor's Order, they were ſo little Apprehenſive of his Threats, that they even rais'd his Fury, by Remonſtrating their Innocence, whom he had put to Death; upon which he Commanded their Tongues and Feet to be Cut off, and afterwards finiſh'd their Sacrifice by the Sword. Strange difference of that Primitive Age from this! Then was the great Solicitude of Chriſtians to Signalize themſelves by their generous Charity to the Diſtreſs'd, and to prepare for a Glorious Death: And now the great Concern is, to be moſt remarkably Vain, and to Proſtitute all that to Extravagance and Idleneſs, which ſhould be the Help of the Poor. And canſt thou, Chriſtian, anſwer this Method; that God's Bleſſings being now

now mu'tiplied to thee in Peace, thou shouldst be less Faithful in his Service? Let not thy Plea be in the Necessity of complying with the World; for this is a Necessity grounded on the Love of the World; and hadst thou the Spirit of the Primitive Times, thou wouldst soon Rank the greatest part of this Necessity under another Head, even of Superfluity and Extravagance. The only thing Necessary is to Save thy Soul; study this Point, and it will soon change all thy Present Ideas.

St. *Encratia*, *April* 16.

A Holy Virgin Born in *Portugal*, but coming with her Father to *Saragosa* in *Spain*, and seeing there the great Cruelty of *Dacianus* in Persecuting the Christians, she was so strongly mov'd with a Holy Zeal in their behalf, that she publickly reproach'd him with his Barbarous Proceedings: Upon which he was so enrag'd, that he put her to all the Torments, that a Malicious Cruelty could suggest, tearing her Flesh with Hooks of Iron, Cutting off her Breasts, and having laid open her very Bones, then

then order'd her to be thrown into Priſon, to Die a Lingering Death under the Corruption of her Wounds; and thus ſhe finiſh'd a Glorious Combat in the Third Century. And canſt thou, Chriſtian, now complain of what thou ſuffer'ſt? Thy Troubles are no other way great, than as thy want of Patience makes them ſo. Stand by this Martyr of Chriſt and compare: And yet ſhe rejoices, while thou art complaining. She caſts the Devil into Deſpair, while thou art Pleaſing him by thy Fretful Impatience. Repent, ask Pardon for what is paſt, and by thy Prayers and Tears prevail on Heaven to grant thee a better Spirit. Grieve not at thy Troubles, but at thy Weakneſs, for this is thy only Affliction. All others may help thee on thy Way, and 'tis this only keeps thee back. Put not off thy Amendment, in waiting for a change of Circumſtances; but labor to change thy ſelf, and then theſe will do.

St.

St. *Anicetus*, *April* 17.

Wisd. 5. 1, 5. *Jo.* 16. 20, 22.

BOrn in *Syria*, and Bishop of *Rome*, was put to Death for the Christian Faith under the Emperor *Antoninus*, *An.* 163. Pray for the present Bishop of that See; Pray for all Prelates and Pastors, and for the whole Church, that as God has Promis'd to lead it into all Truth, so by their Care, who watch over it, it may be deliver'd from all Abuses and Scandals. Pray for all those, who are divided from it, whether by Heresie or Schism.

It being also the Day of S. *Stephen* the Third Abbot of the *Cistercians*, in the Eleventh Century, who Retiring into a Solitude, with Two other Companions, liv'd with such Extraordinary Rigor, that in several Years, there were none Hardy enough to join with them in their Method of Life; till at length S. *Bernard* put himself under his Conduct, whose wonderful Sanctity speaks sufficiently the Greatness of his Master. The best Path is that, which is trod by few: 'Tis better Walking in this, tho' reproach'd by many, than to gain their good

good Word by joining with them. Does not thou obſerve, that Ambition, Pride, Prodigality, Injuſtice, Habitual Idleneſs, Intemperance, *&c.* are the common Practices of Profeſs'd Chriſtians; and muſt not thou forſake theſe to be a Chriſtian? Art thou then to be invited by Number, or to follow the Goſpel, tho' the greater Number be againſt thee?

St. *Apolonius*, *April* 18.

A *Roman* Senator in the Third Century, who in the time, when *Commodus* had given ſome Peace to the Church, was accus'd by his own Servant for his Faith in Chriſt, and being ſeiz'd, obtain'd leave of the Prefect to give an account of his Faith in a Full Senate: But it not being in the Power of his Brethren to over-rule the Law, he was Beheaded, and thus Seal'd the Truth with his Blood. Doſt thou obſerve, how far a Soul goes, which is carried on by the Force of Truth, without any regard to Preſent Convenience, to Intereſt, Honor, or Life? If God rul'd in thy Heart, and thou didſt but look

on

on thy Salvation the great Buſineſs of thy Life, theſe Private Conſiderations would not ſo often put in Caveats againſt thy beſt Propoſals. Thou haſt Thoughts of being Good, but haſt not Courage to be ſo. In ſome Caſes the Apprehenſion of what the World will ſay; in others the Diſpleaſure of Friends; in others the Loſs of ſome Preferment or Intereſt; in others the Fear of Reproach, or Retrenching of State, is a Barr to the moſt Eſſential Duties, and the Intereſt of the next World gives place to this. See, if this be not thy Guilt; if not in Great things, at leaſt, in thy common Converſation. Accuſtom thy ſelf to a greater Simplicity of Mind, and let not Little Politics carry thee on, when Plain-dealing would be much more to thy Purpoſe.

St. *Alphegus*, *April* 19.

A Holy Man of great Auſterity, was firſt Biſhop of *Wincheſter*, and afterwards of *Canterbury*, and a little before the Conqueſt, after Seven Months Impriſonment, was put to Death by

the *Danes* in Hatred to the Christian Religion, *An.* 1012. Pray for all the Bishops of Christ's Church, and in particular for him, under whose Charge thou art: Pray for this Nation, that God would in his Mercy take off his Scourges from it, preserve it from Atheism and Infidelity, and not let these be the Punishment of its Vice, but make it Zealous for Virtue, for Justice, and for Truth.

Before he was rais'd to the Prelacy, he liv'd in a Solitude near the *Bath*, where his Eminent Virtue invited many to be his Followers; but some of them falling from their First Fervor, contented themselves with deceiving their Superior with an affected Exactness, but out of his Sight took very Scandalous Liberties, particularly in setting up to Feast and Drink in the Night, and Fasting in the Day with the Rigor of the strictest Hermits: But tho' they impos'd on this Good Man, yet God's Justice soon discover'd their Hypocrisie in the Punishment of it. See thou imitate not these unhappy Men, but observe exactly Discipline: 'Tis the Practice of too many to Transgress it, and their Glory is to deceive those, under whose Care they are, by unduly

going

going Abroad, and unseasonable Meetings at Home Break all such Customs; for there is so much of Folly, Injustice and Deceit in them, that they cannot fail of proving thy Scourge in bringing Mischief on thee.

St. *Theotimus*, *April* 20.

BIshop of *Tomes* in *Scythia* in the Fifth Century, a Man of that great Sanctity and wonderful Meekness, that he seem'd fitted by Heaven to deal with such Barbarous People, as were the *Huns*, who often gave him Disturbance, and his own Flock, whose natural roughness made his Charge difficult enough. He was several times Assaulted, and as often Miraculously deliver'd, God Manifesting the Sanctity of his Servant by his particular Protection of him. Let this Saint encourage thee to be Moderate in thy Words and Actions. Roughness and Passion upon every Ordinary Provocation, destroy all Society, and break Peace; 'tis an Argument of a Weak Mind and Ill Education: Labor therefore to avoid them, by a more Gentle and Softer Method, as thou de-

ſir'ſt to preſerve thy Reputation, either as to this World, or the next. The ſtupid or careleſs Temper of ſome may make a warm Reproof ſometimes neceſſary; but let not thy Paſſion or Ill Humor be Judge of theſe Occaſions; for the Effect of this will rather be Contempt than Obedience; and a Moderate Remonſtrance will be more to the purpoſe, when theſe put thee upon unſeaſonable Heats. Suſpect thy ſelf, as often as thou art diſturb'd, and rather chuſe then to deliberate, than to follow the Dictates of thy diſorder'd Reaſon; and thus governing thy ſelf, thou wilt be in the beſt Diſpoſition for governing others.

St. *Anſelm*, 12. Cent. *April* 21.

2 *Tim.* 4. 1, 8. *Mat.* 5. 13, 19.

BOrn in *Piemont*, and reclaim'd from the Diſorders of his Youth by the Piety of the Famous *Lanfrancus*; by his Advice, and of the Archbiſhop of *Roan*, he became Religious, and made ſuch Advance in all Virtue, that he was ſoon choſe Prior, and then Abbot. Going

Going afterwards into *England* to consult *Lanfrancus*, then Archbishop of *Canterbury*, his Virtue so much recommended him to King *William* II. that after the Death of *Lanfrancus*, he oblig'd him to fill up that Vacancy, where his Zeal rais'd him so many Enemies, and brought upon him so severe a Persecution of the King, that he was forc'd to leave the Kingdom. Returning again under *Henry* I. he was again chaced away, but being recall'd, he Died in Peace, being in Sackcloth and Ashes. Let his eminent Virtue arm thee against Despair in regard of those, whose disorder'd Youth gives thee little Hopes of good. God often shews his Power in their Conversion, and makes of them Vessels of Honor. Upon the same Grounds, despair not of thy Self, whatever thy present Weakness be; but still continue on thy Endeavors for Amendment, under the Conduct of such an one, whose Piety, Prudence and Patience, may support thee under the delays of thy Obstinate Evil. Zeal is not only commendable, but necessary, amidst the general Corruptions of the World; but if it starts, and gives over its Cause, upon perceiving Displeasure or Opposition of Men, it is not the Zeal of the

Gospel. He must have Courage to suffer for Justice and Truth, who undertakes their Cause.

St. *Soterus* and *Caius*, *April* 22.

Apoc. 19 1, 9. *Jo.* 15. 5, 11.

TWO Holy Popes put to Death for the Christian Faith; the former under *Marcus Aurelius*, *An.* 180. the other under *Diocletian*, *An.* 296. Pray for the present Bishop of that See, for all Bishops and Pastors of Christ's Church, that whether in Peace or Persecution, they may ever bear Testimony of the Truth. Their Lives are powerful Perswasives to Virtue, if they live up to their Character, and to Liberty, if they give Countenance to it. All were never as they should be; and if it be so now, and thou art sensible how very prejudicial this is to Christianity, Pray for Remedy; thy Charity may be some help to this Evil. Help not to publish their Crimes, which carry so much Scandal and Contagion whereever they go; but rather bewail them in Private, and only inform those, whose

whoſe Charge it is to reprove and correct them. Let not their Infidelity make thee queſtion the Truth of what thou profeſſeſt. Thy Faith is built on the Truth of God, and the Promiſes of Chriſt; and however Particular Perſons may fail, yet theſe cannot. Let the Failings therefore of others make thee fear, and tremble, and humbly diſtruſt of thy ſelf, but not of God's Power, his Goodneſs and Truth.

St. *George*, *April* 23.

2 *Tim.* 2. 8, 10. and 3. 10, 12. *Jo.* 15. 1, 7.

1. HE is the Ancient Patron of this Nation: Pray therefore, this Day, for thy Country, recommend it earneſtly to the Divine Protection, beg all Bleſſings upon it both Temporal and Spiritual, and let thy Petitions be multiplied in proportion to the many Evils, to which it is ſubject.

2. He was a Martyr: Pray for all thoſe who ſuffer for their Faith, that they may be ſtrengthn'd from above: Pray for all others, under whatever

kind of Trouble, that God would give them Patience, and be their Comfort.

Authentic History furnishes us with very few Particulars relating to this Martyr, besides his being a Soldier in *Cappadocia*, and being put to Death, under *Diocletian*, for the Christian Faith. The general Opinion of his Courage in his Military Profession, and great Constancy in his Suffering for Justice and Truth, have been a Motive to our Forefathers, to chuse him for the Patron of this Nation, as hoping, by his Charity, to obtain of God a plentiful Benediction in all Public Affairs, and Success to their Arms. And the same Considerations may be Motives to us, this Day, to enquire into our selves, and see how much we want his Charitable Assistance, in order to the obtaining those so necessary Qualifications, which have render'd him so Eminent to the Christian World, I mean his Courage and Constancy, without which we can neither do what we are commanded, nor suffer what Providence has ordain'd for us. One that was a Soldier is a proper Patron for Christians, because, whatever their Sex or Condition be, they are all Soldiers of Christ, their whole Life is a Warfare upon Earth,

they

they have many Battels to Fight, they are to meet very Powerful Enemies in the Field, and without great Courage and Perseverance they can never hope for Victory.

Courage is necessary in the discharge of our Common Duties, because of the great opposition we meet with from the general Corruption of those, with whom we live and converse. Custom and Practice have given such Authority to sinful Liberty and Neglect, that a Compliance seems expected from all; and those, who refuse to go along with the Stream, must look to be Censur'd of Pride, Singularity and Bigotry: Now while this seems to concern our Reputation, and press upon the most Tender Part, such as have not Courage to bear this Stroke, surrender themselves, and yield, and by joining in what they disapprove, shew, 'tis Fear carries them on, and that they would be Virtuous, if they were but bold enough to be so. 'Tis this Fear puts great numbers upon complying with all the Extravagancies of the Mode and Age; and tho' they are sensible, how disagreeable, and even opposite, many of these are to the Spirit of the Gospel, yet aw'd by what the World will say,

they chose to follow what they condemn, and become Children of the World, because they dare not be the Disciples of Christ. Hence it is, the Humility of the Gospel, its Temperance, its Moderation, its Justice, its Modesty, &c. have so very few Abetters; the World has given these an ill Name, and sets up for another Way, and here goes the Throng of Christians; leaving but a slender Number to embrace the Foolishness of this World, that which Christ has chosen.

Courage again is necessary for standing against Temptations: For want of this, Weak Christians are overcome, and many Pious Souls falling into great Dejection, lay themselves more open to the Enemy, and become unfit for all those Holy Exercises, by which they are to expect Relief against him. This sort of Weakness, tho' it be not directly Sinful, yet 'tis as Prejudicial to a Christian Life, as possibly can be; and 'tis what I Conjure all, that pretend to Virtue, to Arm themselves against with all their Power, and to let no pretext of Troublesom Affairs, or even of their own Unworthiness, or frequent Failings, to flatter them into it, however it may appear most just and reasonable;

able; for there's a Subtil Enemy under this Cover, who designs insensibly to draw them into a Snare, from whence he knows they cannot be deliver'd, but with Infinit Labor.

Courage is still necessary to struggle with the many difficulties of this Life, to stand, with a Christian Moderation, under the Provocations, Injustices, Injuries, Oppressions, Affronts, *&c.* which are the Common Portion of all, but most particularly of those, who endeavor to live according to the Gospel. For tho', according to the common Character of the World, they are reputed Poor-spirited and Tame, who receive all these with little or no Resentment, and without Thoughts of Retaliation; yet 'tis certain, this is an Argument of the greatest Courage, and that there's something of Christian Bravery in those Spirits. The evidence of this appears upon Reflection, that to be easily Mov'd is the effect of Weakness; 'tis so in Bodies; the Shrubs and Reeds are shaken with every Breath of Air, whilst the sturdy Oak stands against the Violence of a Storm. Weak Tempers are disorder'd with every Change of Diet and Air; every touch moves the Clappers of little Bells, and they

they are the most silly Birds, that cry out and flutter upon every thing that crosses the Way. 'Tis so in the Mind and Soul; when these are weaken'd thro' Pain or Sickness, they are generally more Peevish, and can bear nothing that thwarts them, without complaints: And we observe in those, who have a Natural Weakness, their Passions are soonest rais'd, and every little Accident is an Alarm, and puts them into such Confusion, that they are capable of no Business, either of this World, or the next. And may not we now hence conclude, that to be easie in Resenting Injuries, to be soon Disturb'd and Passionate upon the Follies and Indiscretions of others, is the Effect of Weakness; and that however the World gives it a more Honorable Name, yet 'tis nothing better than Cowardice, and has nothing Brave and Generous in it? For a Great Soul cannot be mov'd with ordinary Accidents, it passes by all these unconcern'd, and has more of Pity than Anger against the Occasions of them. It's Business is to preserve its own Peace; and 'tis plain, there's always the greatest firmness of Mind, where it stands its Ground, and does not permit it self to be put into disorder: 'Tis the lowest

eſt degree of it to bear common Provocations with quiet; and as it riſes higher, ſo it is able to bear greater Aſſaults, and even to ſee the Terrors of Death, without being caſt down, or diſcourag'd. This is Conſtancy, and the true Chriſtian Courage; 'tis to this evenneſs of Temper we are to endeavor to approach; the nearer we come to it, the better qualified we are to ſtand under the difficulties of this World, againſt Injuries and Oppreſſions, and all the Trials both of Soul and Body; and by obſerving, how eaſie we are in admitting Reſentments, in being provok'd to Impatience, Noiſe, and Paſſion, we may conclude, how many degrees we have of a Coward, and of a Poor Spirit.

There are daily Occaſions of obſerving this, which I leave to every one's particular Care; but there is one Inſtance of this Cowardice, which I am unwilling to omit, ſuch as is often found even in Pious, and otherwiſe very Reſolute Souls, and that is, the difficulty they have in preparing for the laſt Hour, by ſetling their Temporal Affairs, and making their Wills: This I call Cowardice, becauſe it ſeems to proceed from the Apprehenſion they have of Death,

Death, and the Unwillingness of supposing themselves approaching to it: And it being very often attended with a Series of Considerable Mischiefs, requires a Christian's timely Resolution and Care for their prevention. For whoever reflects on the Consequences of this Omission, in the Contentions it entails on Relations, and Families, in the Expences and Law-suits it often occasions, in leaving those to run away with their Estates, who deserve or want them not, and in the Omission, not only of what a Reasonable Charity, but often of what Justice requires, with others of this kind; whoever, I say, reflects on these, and that a Hasty compos'd Will, at the last Extremity, but too often lays a ground for the like Disorder and Confusion, must necessarily Censure this, as a very great Neglect, and not agreeable to the Rules either of Prudence, Justice or of Charity, and therefore is a Point, which requires a Christian's Care, for the making a timely Provision against that Hour, and not putting that off to the last, which ought to be done with greater Consideration, than can be reasonably expected, when Death begins to approach.

Thus is Courage always necessary

for

for a Christian, and without it he cannot either Live or Die well: And it being the Gift of God, it ought to have a part in our Prayers this Day, that so every one may Hope to obtain such a degree of it, as their State requires. Grant it therefore, O God; and since thou art pleas'd to Exercise such Weak Vessels, and Poor Worms, as we are, with so many difficult Trials far above our Strength, leave us not to our selves, but mercifully assist us by thy Grace, that following the Example of thy Saints, we may never be dejected but with Courage and Resolution persevere to the end.

St. *Mellitus*, *April* 24.

A Holy Monk sent by S. *Gregory* into *England* in Company of S. *Augustin*, by whom, upon the Conversion of King *Ethelbert*, he was Consecrated Bishop. After the Death of S. *Augustin*, the great Charge of this yet Infant-Church fell upon him, in which he had difficulties enough; and these became unsupportable, when *Ethelbert* Dying, he was succeeded by a Son, whose

whose Idolatry and Notorious Wickedness put him by all Hopes of Success, in the ill Example it gave to his Subjects. Upon which *Mellitus* went into *France*, to wait there the Orders of Providence: When in a short time the Remarkable Judgments of God awak'ning this Young Prince, touch'd with the Sense of his Impiety, he sent for *Mellitus*, was Baptiz'd by him, and Establish'd him in the See of *Canterbury*, where he Died in all Sanctity, *An.* 624. The best Undertakings have their difficulties, which many times are such, as to leave the Undertakers without Hopes. If this be the Method God permits, canst thou expect, in thy Affairs, to go on without difficulties? Thou must look for them in all thy Concerns, whether of Body or Soul; and must even then hold on with Courage, when Impatience and Inclination perswade thee to Despair. Dost not thou observe, how sometimes the Sun is darken'd with Clouds, and Storms disturb the Air, and yet both Light and Calm return again? So it is in all other Concerns; they are subject to great Variety, and it must be thy Care to stand steddy under both Extremes, so that the one Deject thee not, and the other make thee not too Confident.

St.

St. *Mark*, *April* 25.

Ezek. 1. 10, 14. *Luke* 10, 1, 9.

1. HE was Disciple of St. *Peter*, and one of the Evangelists: Pray, that the Gospel may be the Rule of thy Life, and while thou professest a Faith of what it teaches, see thy Practice be not a Confutation of thy Profession: Pray for all those, who read the Gospel, that thro' Presumption and Rashness, they may not wrest it to their own Perdition, but being assisted by the same Spirit, by which it was writ, may be led into all Truth.

2. He went into *Egypt*, and was the first that Preach'd the Christian Faith at *Alexandria*, where by his Labors the Church was Establish'd, and by his Example the Faithful Train'd up in that Exact Discipline conformable to the Rules of the Gospel, that they were a Pattern to all Believers, and Admir'd even by the Enemies of their Faith. And after having suffer'd great Persecution, he was call'd to the Reward of his Labors in the Eighth Year of *Nero*. Pray for all those, who embrace the true Faith, and for all the Professors

of

of it, that they may live up to the Maxims of the Gospel, and give no occasion to Unbelievers, to Blaspheme the Name of Christ. There's nothing so Scandalous, as a Wicked Life join'd with a True Faith, it carrying every where Contagion along with it, and infecting both Friends and Enemies. There's nothing so provoking to Almighty God, as involving the Contempt of his greatest Mercies, and therefore drawing down his weightiest Judgments. And how ought these to be apprehended by Christians, when they consider *Alexandria*, formerly a City of Saints, but now a Seat of Infidelity? 'Twas the decay of that first Spirit open'd the Way to its Ruin; and 'tis what ought to be dreaded by as many as observe the Vicious Lives of Christians, least the like Fate be the Punishment of like Crimes. Pray for the Reformation of all Believers, that Infidelity may not be the Punishment of abus'd Christianity.

3. This being a Day of Abstinence and Public Prayer, Instituted by St. *Gregory* the Great, in acknowledgment of the Divine Mercy, for putting a Stop to a Mortality in his time at *Rome*, which had carri'd away many Thousands

Thousands by suddain Death; it has been ever since observ'd by the whole Church, as a Day of Humiliation, for the turning away God's Anger from us; for the preventing all Contagious and Pestilential Distempers, and for begging the Divine Blessing on the Fruits of the Earth. Be not absent, if possible, from the Public Devotion; offer up thy Prayers with the Church. Implore God's Mercy on all Sinners; fail not to Humble thy self; and in the Spirit of true Contrition, beg Pardon for all past Offences, that so thy Sins may have no part in drawing Judgments on the Public.

SS. *Cletus* and *Marcellinus*, *April* 26.

1 *Pet.* 1. 3, 7. *Jo.* 15. 5, 11.

TWO Bishops of *Rome*; the former being the Second, that sat in that Chair after St. *Peter*, and suffer'd Martyrdom under *Domitian*: The other Succeeded in that See in the time of *Diocletian*, and as some Authors say, being Terrified with the Severity of his

his Perſecution, was prevail'd on to offer Sacrifice to Idols, tho' others, and thoſe the beſt Criticks in Hiſtory, prove this Paſſage to be Fabulous; but however it was, it is agreed by all, that he ended his Days by Martyrdom, laying down his Life in Teſtimony of the Truth; and that if he was ſtain'd by Denying his Faith, that he made a Public Reparation, and waſh'd it out with his Blood. Pray for the Preſent Biſhop, that fills that See, that he may be aſſiſted from Heaven, for the juſt diſcharge of his Duty, and be preſerv'd from all the Criminal Effects of Human Weakneſs. Pray for all, who ſuffer on account of their Faith, that they may Hazard all Extremities, and forſake all, rather than Chriſt and his Truth. And while thou hear'ſt of the Pillars of the Church Shaken and Falling, Tremble at the Thoughts of Human Weakneſs, and ſeek thou the beſt Security in a moſt Profound Humility, and an Entire Dependance on God.

St.

St. *Anthimus*, *April* 27.

BIshop of *Necomedia* under *Diocleſian*, whoſe Impious Edict being Torn down at Noon-day by a Chriſtian, who could not bear the Blaſphemies it contain'd, the Magiſtrates were ſo Exaſperated, that they Perſecuted the Chriſtians with the utmoſt Rigor, and their great Concern was to find out the Biſhop, who to encourage his Flock, ſurrender'd himſelf to the Soldiers, that ſearch'd for him, and being preſented before the Judge, he ſaid, as *Euſebius* relates it; I am a Prieſt of God, whom I Adore; I offer his Only Son a Sacrifice to him, and in Offering him, I encourage my ſelf likewiſe to become a Sacrifice to him: The God, whom I ſerve, is worthy of ſuch Servants and Prieſts; but for your Gods, they are nothing, and thoſe, that ſerve them, ſhall be cover'd with Confuſion. Upon which, after many Torments, he was Beheaded. And he was follow'd by great Numbers of his Flock, who fell under the Fury of the Heathens, provok'd by a Fire, which conſum'd the Emperor's Palace, and was Maliciouſly

ouſly charg'd upon the Chriſtians. The Love of God and Eternal Goods, rais'd in theſe Primitive Chriſtians the deſire of coming to the Poſſeſſion of them, and they eſteem'd no Evils of this Life a Misfortune, ſo that by ſuch Suffering they could advance in their Way to Eternity. And are not we Created for the ſame Happineſs with them? And why then do we ſuffer our Hearts to be link'd to Earth, and think our ſelves Happy in the Enjoyment of what laſts but for a Moment? O God, this is our great Misfortune, and not the Evils, which we ſuffer; Grant us encreaſe of Faith, that we may be Solicitous for obtaining what we believe, eſteeming the Purchace eaſie upon any Terms, and not permit what we know to be Momentary to have more Power over us, than what we believe Eternal.

St. *Vitalis*, *April* 28.

Wiſd. 5. 1, 5. *Jo.* 15. 1, 7.

THE Father of S. *Gervaſius* and *Protaſius*, who for his Charity in encouraging the Chriſtians to be Conſtant

ſtant in their Sufferings, was apprehended, and having been Tried on the Rack, was afterwards thrown into a Pit, and there cover'd with Stones, *An.* 169. Pray for all that are under any kind of Trouble and Oppreſſion, that God would ſupport them againſt all Dejection and Deſpair; that by the help of his Grace, they may learn to carry their Burthens with Patience and Courage, and by this good Management of Temporal Evils, purchace Eternal Reſt. Imitate the Charity of this Saint, in Encouraging and Comforting the Afflicted, not only as occaſions ſhall offer, but even purpoſely going to ſuch, as thou haſt Reaſon to think in want of Comfort. Such Viſits are the Beſt thou canſt make, and truly becoming Chriſtians, as being the Exerciſe of that Charity, Humility and Self-denial, which they profeſs, but will avail nothing if not practis'd in this Spirit. And is it not a thing moſt earneſtly to be deſir'd, that thoſe, who being Born to Plenty, and having Time on their Hands, which they are often at a Loſs, in not knowing how to diſpoſe it, would remember the frequent Opportunities they have of doing good to others and themſelves, and not

let

let Gaming, Idle Converſation, the Park and Plays, run away with all their leiſure Hours, but give ſome of them at leaſt to their Neighbors? How would they, by this Method, Treaſure up to themſelves Heavenly Comforts againſt the Day of their Trouble, and find the good Effects of it in Everlaſting Rewards? Pray that all Chriſtian Breaſts may be poſſeſs'd with the true Senſe of this Charity, and that the Practice of it may grow more in Faſhion than at preſent it is.

St. *Peter*, *April* 29.

2 *Tim.* 2. 8, 10. and 3. 10, 12.
Jo. 15. 1, 7.

A Religious Man of the Order of St. *Dominic*, who having liv'd many Years in the Practice of great Auſterities, of Humility and Charity, and with an Extraordinary Zeal labor'd in the Converſion of Sinners to Repentance, and of Erring Chriſtians to the Truth, receiv'd the Reward of his Charity, by being Barbarouſly Murther'd in the Year 1252. on his Journey to *Milan*. Join with the Charity of this Holy

Holy Man, this Day, and if thy State obliges thee to the Care of Souls, let his Example excite in thee a Holy Zeal for the good of thy Neighbor, and see that none perish thro' thy Sloth or Neglect. But whatever thy Condition be, fail not, at least, to offer thy daily Prayers for all, that are engag'd in Sin or Error: Their ill State demands thy Compassion; and if thou hadst a true Sense of it, thou would'st never be wanting in this Charity. To live in Sin, in the Displeasure of God, and in the Way to Eternal Misery; and that this is the Case of such Infinit Numbers, of thy Fellow-members and Brethren. 'Tis a Thought, which in as many as have one Spark of Christian Charity and Faith, must be follow'd with Prayers and Sighs: *Defectio tenuit me, pro peccatoribus derelinquentibus legem tuam*: My Soul Fainted away, says *David*, because of Sinners, that forsake thy Law. Let thy Charitable Compassion have the same Effect on thee, and oblige thee to bewail their Misery: Such a daily Fainting of thy Soul may be a Means of giving them Life, and the best Security of thy own.

St. *Catherin, April* 30.

2 *Cor.* 10. 17, and 11. 2. *Mat.* 25. 1, 13.

A Holy Virgin of *Sienna*, and of the Order of St. *Dominic*, who was wonderful for her rigorous Fasting, and other great Austerities. God was pleas'd to Exercise this his Servant with violent and long Temptations, and with painful Sickness of many Years; under all which Trials she held out with admirable Patience, Humility, and Resignation, and had the Reward of her Labors even in this Life, in many Signal Favors receiv'd from the Hand of God. Pray for the Spirit of this Holy Virgin; and first, that if thou art not advis'd to Extraordinary Rigors, thou may'st at least be Faithful, in those, which the Church prescribes to all the Faithful, not requiring unnecessary Dispensations, nor by studied Contrivances endeavoring to take off all Self-denial from them; but there willingly admitting some uneasiness in such Institutions, as are ordain'd for thy Humiliation and Punishment. 'Tis a kind of Fraud to deceive or dis-

appoint

appoint the Church, and thou canſt not over-reach her, but with loſs to thy Soul.

2*dly*. That thou may'ſt be Courageous and Faithful under the Violence of Temptations; theſe can be no Prejudice to thy Soul, if thou yieldeſt not, tho' they were as laſting as thy Life. Chriſt himſelf has taught thee this in the Temptations, with which he was Aſſaulted; and with which he has been pleas'd to exerciſe the beſt of his Servants. They may be very Troubleſom to thee; but Patience under this Trouble will render thee more acceptable to God: 'Tis Self-love puts thee often upon deſiring Quiet and Eaſe, and 'tis an Effect of the ſame ill Root, to be Fretful, Impatient and Dejected under ſuch Diſquiets. They may diſturb thee in thy Prayers and moſt Solemn Devotions; but as long as thou makeſt Oppoſition, and art diſpleas'd with them, they can do no Injury to the Sacrifice thou offer'ſt; but may rather be a help to thee in approaching to God; for tho' undiſturb'd Prayer be more agreeable to thy Wiſhes, yet thy Zeal in Fighting againſt the Enemies of thy Soul, and of God, may be more grateful to him, who

will be the Reward of thy Fidelity in thoſe Trials. Let it be thy Care to avoid Temptations, what thou canſt; but at whatever time they come, if contemning them will not procure thy Peace, ſtand reſolutely againſt them, and fear not, for God will be thy Helper in the Day of Battel, and from the Malice of thy Enemy raiſe thy Triumphs.

3*dly*. Pray thou may'ſt cheerfully embrace all Infirmities, Pains and Sickneſs, the Divine Providence has ordain'd for thee: All whatever befalls thee of this kind, is the expreſs Appointment of God, and if ſubmitted to with a Patient Conformity to his Will, may be a great Improvement to thy Soul. Grieve not therefore, tho' thou canſt not then Read and Pray, as at other times; ſhort Ejaculations are, in thoſe Circumſtances, as effectual as longer Prayers; and remember, thy Soul may with much larger Steps, approach towards God by Patience and Humility under the Inconveniencies of Pain and Sickneſs, than in thy greateſt Recollection of Health and Eaſe. However, when God ſhall Viſit thee with Sickneſs, lay not wholly aſide, as is too often done, thy uſual Exerciſes; but

but as far as thy Condition will permit, desire the Assistance of some Charitable Friend, who may Read and Pray by thee. Many are confin'd to their Chamber and Bed, who are disabled from performing this themselves, and yet are capable of receiving this Help from another's Hand: And if a long Attention be Prejudicial, it may be easily proportion'd to their Strength, by the same Method, as Weak Stomachs observe with their Diet, who being not dispos'd for a full Meal, are advis'd to Eat little and often. Such help as this seems very necessary to support the Soul under these Trials; for 'tis not reasonable it should then be Neglected, when 'tis its greatest Distress; especially since this is the most Effectual Means to Sanctifie all Suffering, and prepare the Soul for happily departing out of this Life. But then, if God shall so order it, as to remove all danger, is it not again reasonable, that their first Strength should be given to him, not letting Gaming and Cards for some Days get the Start of the Prayer-book, but Consecrating the first degrees of Recovery to him that gives it? Resolve on this Method, as often as thou shalt be inpos'd,

diſpos'd, and queſtion not but thy Sickneſs will be a help to Heaven.

It being alſo the Day of St. Erkenwald,

Who was Biſhop of *London* ſoon after its Converſion to the Chriſtian Faith, and Eminent for Sanctity: Pray for thy Country, that God would pleaſe to Viſit it with Heavenly Bleſſings, remove all Vice and Blindneſs, and eſtabliſh it in all Sanctity and Truth. Conclude the Month with Contrition and Thankſgiving.

FINIS.